Reason and Religion:

OR, THE

Grounds and Measures

OF

DEVOTION,

Consider'd from the

NATURE of GOD,

AND THE

Nature of Man.

In several Contemplations.

WITH

Exercises of Devotion *applied to every* Contemplation.

By *John Norris*, M. A. and Fellow of *All-Souls* Colledge in *Oxford.*

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To his Grace the
DUKE of ORMOND,
CHANCELLOR
OF THE
Univerſity of *Oxford.*

May it pleaſe your Grace,

'TIS not that I affect the Patronage of great Perſons, that this *Philoſophical* piece of *Devotion* is now commended to *Yours*, but becauſe I thought none

ſo fit as your *Grace* to Patronize a performance that ſo well agrees both to the *Character* of your *Perſon*, and to the *Station* whereby you ſtand related to us.

Reaſon and *Religion*, which make every Page in this Volume, as they are the two greateſt Perfections of Human Nature, ſo do they both conſpire in your *Graces* Perſon, and that to ſuch a degree as would too much

much employ our wonder, were they not both ſo *Hereditary* to your Noble Blood, as to ſeem rather *entailed* upon you by *deſcent*, than to be of your own *acquiring*.

But, beſides your own Perſonal Eminency in theſe two Noble Qualifications of Mind, your *Grace* has already undertaken to be their Patron and Protector. *Reaſon* and *Religion* may very fitly be inſcribed as a

Motto upon the Gates of our *Univerſity*; and every one of our Colleges is a School of *Piety*, as well as of *Philoſophy*. The accompliſhment of our Intellectuals and Morals, is the peculiar deſignation of this Place, and our proper and almoſt only buſineſs in it. And in purſuance of this end, your *Grace* has been lately pleaſed to give us the *honour*, and your *ſelf* the *trouble* of being our

our *Chancellor*. I could not therefore but preſume, that a Perſon by *diſpoſition* of Mind ſo much a *lover*, and by *place* ſo much concerned, to be a *Protector* of *Learning* and *Piety*, would be eaſily inclined to countenance a performance, whoſe direct aim is the promotion of both. And now that your *Grace* may receive as much Benefit from the peruſal of theſe *Meditations*, as *they* will re-

ceive honour and reputation from your *Graces* Favour and Protection, is all that is further deſired

By your Graces
moſt humble
and devoted Servant,
J. Norris.

TO

To the

READER.

THere having been ſeveral Excellent things of a *Devotional Nature* Written for the Uſe and Benefit of *Ordinary* and *Unlearned* Perſons, but little or nothing for the pious entertainment of more *refined* and *elevated* Underſtandings, I thought I could not employ my Pen to better purpoſe than in writing ſomething of the like Kind for the uſe of the *Learned Reader*, who, perhaps needs as much to be aſſiſted in his *Devotion* as the more *Ignorant*; and whoſe

whoſe *Heart* may want as much to be *Inflamed*, as the others *Head* does to be *Inſtructed*.

It muſt be acknowledged therefore that I now write only to thoſe of the *Learned Order*, and not to all of them neither, but only to thoſe who are not ſpoil'd by their *Learning*, and whoſe underſtandings are not *Cramp'd* by the cleaving Prejudices of *Scholaſtick Education*, To thoſe who have a genius for the the *Contemplative Way*, who have *Patience* enough to perſue a long train of thoughts, *Acuteneſs* enough to diſcern their Order and Dependence, and (which is worth all) *Indiffe-*

rency

rency enough to use and allow *Liberty* of *Thinking*, and not to startle, and be affrighten'd at a *New Notion.*

By these few hints the Reader may easily perceive both *what kind of Compositions* these are, and how I would have him come *Prepared* and Qualifi'd to the Reading of them. What further concerns him to know, in reference to the Subject and Design of the Book, he may learn from the *Introduction.*

J. N.

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The Introduction.

I.

THERE being nothing of greater conſequence, to the higheſt Intereſt of Man, than the knowledge of *God* and *Himſelf*, I thought I could not better employ my Solitude, either for my *Own* or for the *World's* advantage, than in exerciſing my ſevereſt Contemplations upon theſe two great and important Subjects, the *Nature* of *God*, and the *Nature* of *Man*.

II.

It muſt indeed be confeſs'd, that there is nothing whereof we have or can have ſo little knowledge, as of theſe two things; and 'tis much to be lamented that *there* ſhould lie our greateſt *Ignorance*, where we are moſt concern'd to *know*. But thus it is: *That* of our ſelves, which we are beſt acquainted with, is

leaſt of all our ſelves: and the *unknown* part of this little World is much greater than the *known*. We know but little of our *Bodies*, but infinitely leſs of our *Souls*. God has not given us any *Idea* of the *latter*, and whatever we can borrow from our *Senſes* will never be able to ſupply that defect. For there is a greater diſtance and diſproportion between an *Immaterial* ſubſtance and a *Senſible*, than between one ſenſible and another. But now the underſtanding the nature of one ſenſible will not ſuffice to make us underſtand the nature of another. For a Man born Blind will never from his underſtanding of *Sounds* come to underſtand *Colours*. Much leſs therefore will our underſtanding of *Senſible* things help us to underſtand the nature of *Immaterial* ſubſtances.

III.

And if not of Immaterial ſubſtances in *general*, much leſs will it ſerve us to underſtand the Eſſence of the *great God*, which infinitely tranſcends

tranſcends all other Immaterial ſubſtances. The Idea of God is leaſt capable of all Spiritual Beings, to be form'd out of *ſenſible phantaſms*. For I conſider that by how much the more our Mind is raiſed to the Contemplation of Spiritual things, by ſo much the more we always *abſtract* from *ſenſibles*. But now the *higheſt* and *laſt* term of Contemplation is, the *Divine Eſſence*. Whence it follows neceſſarily, that the Mind which ſees the Divine Eſſence, muſt be *totally* and *thoroughly* abſolv'd from all commerce with the Corporeal Senſes, either by *Death*, or ſome *extatical* and *rapturous Abſtraction*. So true is that which God ſaid to *Moſes*, *Thou can'ſt not ſee my face, for there ſhall no man ſee me, and live*, Exod. 33. 20.

IV.

So far therefore are we from deriving any Idea of God from our Senſes, that they are our greateſt Impediment in Divine Contemplations. So great, that we cannot any other way *clearly* apprehend the

Eſſence of God while we are lodg'd in the Priſon of our Senſes. God cannot give us a diſtinct view of himſelf while we hold any commerce with our Senſes. For he that knows exactly what proportion our preſent condition bears to his own Divine Glories, has told us, That no Man ſhall *ſee him*, and *live*. We muſt therefore for ever deſpair of conceiving the Divine Eſſence *clearly* and *diſtinctly*, not only *from* our Senſes, but even *with them*.

V.

Not that there is any darkneſs or obſcurity in God. No, God is the moſt knowable Object in himſelf. For he is the *Firſt Being*, and therefore the *Firſt Truth*, and therefore the *Firſt Intelligible*, and conſequently the *moſt Intelligible*. One Apoſtle ſays that he *dwells in light*; and another, that he *is light*, and that there is no darkneſs at all in him. God therefore conſider'd in his own Nature is as well the moſt *Intelligible*, as the moſt *Intelligent* Being in the World.

Tim. 6. 16.
John 1. 5.

VI. The

VI.

The difficulty therefore ariſes not from the *obſcurity* of the *Object*, but from the *diſproportion* of the *Faculty*. For our Underſtandings ſtand affected to the *moſt manifeſt* Objects, as the Eye of a Bat to the light of the Sun, as the Philoſopher obſerves in his *Metaphyſics*. God dwells in light, as the Apoſtle ſays, but then 'tis ſuch as no Man can approach unto; φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον he inhabits *unapproachable light*: or a Light which cannot be come at, not for its *diſtance* (for he is not far from every one of us) but for its *brightneſs*. The very Angels are forc'd to *veil their faces* when they ſee it, but for Mortals, they cannot ſo much as come *nigh it*. The ſhort is, God is *too Intelligible* to be here clearly underſtood by an *Imbody'd* underſtanding; and too great a Light hinders viſion, as much as Darkneſs.

1 Tim. 6. 16.

Act. 17. 27.

VII.

But tho' we cannot here have a clear and diſtinct knowledge either of *God* or *our Selves*, yet we may

know so much of both as may serve the ends of *Piety* and *Devotion*. We may by attending to that general Idea of God, which is by himself imprinted on our Minds, learn to unfold many of the Perfections of his Glorious and Invisible Essence; and tho' we cannot see his *face* and live, yet his *back-parts* (we know) were once seen by a Mortal capacity, and so may be again. And for *our selves*, tho' God has not given us any *Idea* of our own Souls, yet the powers and operations, the condition, circumstances, and accidents of our Nature, are things that may fall within the Sphere of Human consideration. And from both these we may derive Measures for our due behaviour towards the Great God. And this is the design of the present Contemplations, *viz.* to consider so much of the nature of God, and the nature of Man, as may afford sufficient Grounds and Measures for true Piety and Devotion.

VIII.

By *Devotion* here I do not meerly underſtand that ſpecial diſpoſition or act of the Soul, whereby we warmly and paſſionately addreſs our ſelves to God in Prayer (which is what is commonly meant by Devotion) but I uſe the word in a greater Latitude, ſo as to comprehend under it, *Faith*, *Hope*, *Love*, *Fear*, *Truſt*, *Humility*, *Submiſſion*, *Honour*, *Reverence*, *Adoration*, *Thankſgiving*, in a word, all that Duty which we owe to God. Nor by this acceptation do I ſtretch the word beyond what either from its riſe it *may*, or by frequent uſe among the Learned it *does* ſignifie. Devotion is *a devovendo*, from *devoting*, or giving up ones ſelf wholly to the Service of another. And accordingly thoſe among the *Heathens* who deliver'd and conſign'd themſelves up to Death, for the ſafety of their Country, were call'd *Devoti*. And ſo in like manner for a Man to give up himſelf wholly and intirely to the Service of God, and actually to demean himſelf towards him in

the conduct of his life, as becomes a Creature towards his Creator, is Devotion. And in this Latitude the word is used by *Aquinas*, who defines Devotion to be, *A will readily to give up ones self to all those things which belong to the Service of God.*

22da Q. 82. A. 1.

IX.

This is what I here understand by Devotion, and of which I intend in the following Contemplations to assign the Grounds and Measures from the *Nature of God*, and the *Nature of Man*. But before I proceed to inforce and direct Devotion from these two particular Subjects of Contemplation, I think it not improper to consider a little by way of preparation, how much Contemplation or Meditation in general contributes to the advantage of Devotion.

X.

They that make *Ignorance* the *Mother* of *Devotion*, cannot suppose Contemplation any great friend to it. For the more a Man Contemplates, the more he will know, and the

the wiſer he grows, the leſs apt upon their ſuppoſition he will be for Devotion. But I would ask the Men of *this fancy* this one Queſtion. Is Devotion a Rational thing, or is it not? If not, Why then do they recommend Ignorance or any thing elſe in order to it. For it may as well, nay better, be let alone. But if it be a Rational thing, then they muſt either ſay, that the more a Man conſiders, the leſs he will diſcover the Reaſons of it; or that the more he diſcovers the Reaſons of it, the leſs he will be perſuaded to the practice of it. Both which propoſitions are abſurd and ridiculous enough to be *laught* at, but too ridiculous to be *ſeriouſly refuted.*

XI.

But to ſhew how much Contemplation ſerves to the advantage of Devotion, we need only conſider, that Devotion is an act of the Will, that the Object of the Will is good apparent, or good underſtood, and conſequently that every act of the Will is influenc'd and regulated by

con-

consideration. Devotion therefore is as much influenc'd by consideration as any other act of the Will is: And therefore I cannot but admire at the Disposers of the Angelical Hierarchies, for making the *Seraphim* excel in *Love* and *Devotion*, and the *Cherubim* in *Knowledge*. As if Knowledge were not the best preparative for Devotion.

XII.

I deny not but that *Knowledge* and *Devotion* often go assunder, and the *Wisest* are not always the *Devoutest*. But then this is not owing to the natural and direct influence of Knowledge, but comes to pass only occasionally and accidentally, by reason of some other impediment: suppose Pride, Lust, Covetousness, or some such indisposition of Mind, which is of *more* force and prevalency to *lett* our Devotion, than Knowledge is to *further* it. And then no wonder that the heavier Scale weighs down. But still Knowledge has a *natural* aptness to excite Devotion, and will infallibly do it if

if not hinder'd by ſome other cauſe. So that we may take this for a never-failing Rule, That all other things being equal, the more knowing and conſidering, ſtill the more Devout. And in this ſenſe alſo that of the *Pſalmiſt* will be verifi'd, *while I was muſing the fire kindled.* Pſal. 39.

The Great God ſo inlighten my Mind, and ſo govern my Pen, that by theſe my Meditations I may illuſtrate his ineffable Excellence, and kindle holy flames of Devotion, both in my Self, and in my Reader. To him therefore I Pray in the words of *Moſes, I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy glory,* Amen.

Con-

Contemplation I.

Of the general Idea of God.

I.

GOD never at any time diſcover'd ſo much of himſelf in ſo few words, as when he ſaid to *Moſes*, enquiring by what *Name* he ſhould ſtile him, to make him known to the Children of *Iſrael*, *Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the children of Iſrael*, I AM *hath ſent me unto you*, אהיה אשר אהיה *i. e.* not as we render it in *Engliſh*, *I am that I am*, but, *I am that am*, or, *I am he that am.* And ſo the Seventy read it, Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ ὤν, *I am he that is.*

II.

This is the Sacred and Incommunicable Name of the Great God, that which contains in it πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τ῀ θεότητ῀, *all the Fulneſs of the Godhead*, all the Treaſures of the Divinity.

vinity. By this Name he is distinguish'd not only from false Gods, but from all other Beings whatsoever. *I am he that am*, says God, implying that he is after some very Eminent and Peculiar Manner, and that nothing else besides him *truly* is. This therefore denotes the great Eminence and Peculiarity both of the *Essence* and of the *Existence* of God. Here therefore I shall take my ground, and shall hence deduce and unfold, 1. The general Idea or Notion of God. 2*ly*. Some of those chief Excellencies and Perfections of his which may have a more strong and immediate Influence upon our *Piety* and *Devotion*.

III.

In the present Contemplation I am concern'd for no more than only to fix the general Idea or Notion of God. This is of extraordinary moment to the clearness and distinctness of our following Contemplations, for unless we take the right *thred* at first, the whole progress will be nothing else but *error* and *confusion*.

IV. Now

IV.

Now as to the general Idea or firſt Conception of God, this has been Univerſally underſtood to be, that he is a *Being abſolutely Perfect.* This I ſay has been made the general Notion of God in all the *Metaphyſics* and *Divinity* that I have yet ſeen. And particularly it has been imbraced by two Authors of extraordinary Speculation, *Carteſius* and Dr. *More*, whoſe Authority in this matter claims a peculiar deference, becauſe they are Men that Philoſophize with a free and *unaddicted* genius, and write not as they *read*, but as they *think*.

V.

This Opinion, becauſe embraced by *many*, and ſome of them *great* Patrons, I once took for a Theorem of unqueſtionable Truth. But upon a more narrow inſpection, I find it neceſſary to diſſent from it, tho' it be call'd *ſingularity* to do ſo. For however plauſible it may at firſt view appear, I think there is no leſs an *Objection* than plain *Demonſtration*

ſtration againſt it. Which I make out upon theſe grounds.

VI.

Firſt I conſider that the Idea of a thing is that formal conception or inward word of the Mind, which expreſſes or repreſents the Eſſence or Nature of a thing. Then again, by the Eſſence of a thing, is meant that which *ought* to be firſt conceiv'd in a thing, and to which all other things are underſtood as ſuperadded. I ſay which *ought* to be firſt conceiv'd, becauſe in fixing the Eſſence of a thing, not the *arbitrary* or *accidental*, but the *natural* order of Conception is to be attended to. Whence it follows, that the Idea of a thing is that which expreſſes that which is *firſt* of a thing in *order* of *conception*.

VII.

This being granted, it does hence evidently follow, That that which is not firſt to be conceiv'd in the nature of a thing, but ſuppoſes ſomewhat there before it in order of conception, cannot be the Idea of that

that thing, tho' it be never ſo neceſſarily and inſeparably joyn'd with it. For if it were, then ſomething would be the Idea of a thing, which is not firſt in order of conception; which is againſt the definition of ſuch an Idea.

VIII.

For, to illuſtrate this by an example, Who will ſay that the *Idea* of a *Triangle* conſiſts in this, that any two of its ſides, taken together, are greater than the third remaining? This is, indeed, a neceſſary *affection* of a Triangle, but it muſt by no means be allow'd to be its *Idea*, becauſe 'tis not what we firſt conceive in it, that being this, *viz. that which is comprehended by three right Lines.* Which being the firſt thing conceiv'd, is therefore the true Idea of a Triangle.

IX.

Now that to be a Being abſolutely perfect, is not the *firſt conceivable* in God, but ſuppoſes ſomething before it in the Divine Nature, is plain from hence, becauſe it may be

proved

proved a *priori*, or by way of a *causal dependence* from ſomething in the ſame Divine Nature. That it may be thus proved I ſhall make appear in my ſecond Contemplation, where I ſhall make it my profeſt buſineſs actually to prove it. At preſent I *ſuppoſe* it, and upon that ſuppoſition do, I think, rightly conclude, that *to be a Being abſolutely perfect*, cannot be properly the Idea of God. For the *Conſequence* of my Argument will, I ſuppoſe, be acknowledg'd by all, the only difficulty is concerning the *Propoſition* it ſelf: but the Proof of this I reſerve to the next Contemplation.

X.

If it be in the mean time objected, That to be a Being Abſolutely Perfect, is involv'd in the Notion of God; and that 'tis an Idea that can belong to no other Being, and that therefore it muſt be the Idea of God. To this I anſwer, 1. That a thing may be involv'd in the Notion of a thing either *Formally* and *Explicitly*, or elſe *Vertually* and *Implicitly*.

Whatever is involv'd Formally and Explicitly in any Idea, is Eſſential to that Idea. But not what is involv'd only vertually and implicitly. Thus 'tis vertually and implicitly involv'd in the Idea of a Triangle, that it has three Angles equal to two Right ones, and yet we don't therefore make this the Idea of a Triangle, becauſe 'tis not there *Formally* and *Explicitly*, but only *Vertually* and *Potentially*. But now to be a Being Abſolutely perfect is not involv'd in the Notion of God Formally and Explicitly, but only Vertually and Potentially (as will appear in the next Contemplation) and conſequently 'tis hence more rightly concluded, that the Idea of God does not conſiſt in this, that he is a Being Abſolutely Perfect.

XI.

To the ſecond part of the Objection I anſwer, that 'tis not enough to make a thing the Idea of a thing, becauſe it can belong to no other Being. For then to be *Circumſcriptively in a place* muſt be the Idea of a *Bo-*

a *Body*, and to be *Risible* must be the Idea of a *Man*, for these are supposed to belong to no other Beings. No, the most that ought to be concluded hence, is, that such things are κυριως ἴδια *strict properties*, such as immediately and necessarily flow from the Essence of the subject; not that they are the very Essence it self. When therefore 'tis said that to be a Being Absolutely perfect can belong to no other but God, all that may be hence concluded is, that 'tis an *Essential*, and consequently *Incommunicable Property* of God to be a Being absolutely perfect, but not that therein the *Idea* of God does consist.

XII.

If then this be not the Idea of God, wherein shall we fix it? It must be in something which we *first* conceive in God, and which is the Basis and Foundation of whatever we ascribe to him, whatever we think or say of him. It must be in something that in some measure expresses and represents his Essence. And where shall we look for this but in his *Name*,

that *great Name* whereby he reveal'd himſelf to *Moſes*, and whereby *Moſes* was to make him known to his *own people*, who were then ignorant of him? In this *Name* of God I ſuppoſe his Eſſence and Idea to be couch't.

XIII.

Here therefore I find my ſelf ingaged in theſe two conſiderations. Firſt, Why the Idea of God ſhould be lodg'd in his *Name*. Secondly, What this Idea of God is, which is there lodg'd. That the Idea of God is lodg'd in his Name, I am induced to believe upon theſe grounds. Firſt, Becauſe I think it highly reaſonable to ſuppoſe in general, That whenever *God* gives a *name* to any thing, 'tis ſuch as expreſſes its *nature*. Not that words ſignifie *naturally*, but that God makes choice of ſuch a word whoſe ſignification naturally expreſſes the thing, tho' 'twas through *Arbitrary* inſtitution that it *firſt* came by ſuch a ſignification. In this ſenſe, I ſay, 'tis highly reaſonable to believe, that God always names things according to their *natures*.

tures. For is it consistent with the Accuracy of Infinite Wisdom to *mis-call* any thing? No, as he knows the *number* of things, so is he as well skill'd in their *natures.* And therefore, says the *Psalmist*, *He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names.* That is, by such *significant* names as express their several *Powers* and *Influences.* Psal. 147.

XIV.

Secondly, I consider, That as 'tis highly decorous and reasonable in general, that God should call things by such names as express their natures; so there is *here* a *particular* reason why he should express his *own* Essence in this his name. For thus stood the case: The Children of *Israel* had been now a *long* while conversant among the *Egyptians*, who were the greatest *Idolaters* and *Polytheists* in the World, there they had been used to variety of Gods, who were also call'd by variety of *names.* Hereupon, says *Moses* to God, *Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say un-*

to them, the God of your fathers hath ſent me unto you; and they ſhall ſay to me, What is his Name? what ſhall I ſay unto them? Implying that it was neceſſary (as indeed it was) that God ſhould notifie himſelf by ſuch a Name, as would diſtinguiſh him from all the Gods of the *Heathen*, that is, by a *Proper* and *Eſſential* Name. Whereupon, ſays God to *Moſes, I am that am. Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the children of Iſrael, I am hath ſent me unto you.*

XV.

It being therefore concluded, that the Idea of God muſt be lodg'd in this his Name; let us now conſider what this Idea of God is which is there lodg'd. And for this we muſt attend in the firſt place to the true ſenſe and ſignification of this Name of God, *I am that am*, or, *I am.* Now this can ſignifie no other, but *Being it ſelf*, or *Univerſal Being*, or *Being in General*, *Being* in the *Abſtract*, without any reſtriction or limitation. As if God had ſaid, You enquire who I am, and by what Name

Name I would be diſtinguiſh'd. Know then, that, *I am he that am, I am Being it ſelf.* This therefore muſt expreſs the *Eſſence*, and conſequently this muſt be the *Formal Conception* and *Idea* of God.

XVI.

But this muſt be further *explain'd*, before it be further *confirm'd*. In order to which, I conſider, that as, in every particular order or kind of Being there is a Univerſal Nature, under which all ſingulars are comprehended, and whereof they all partake: as for inſtance, there is the Nature or Eſſence of a Circle or Triangle in common, as well as this or that particular Circle or Triangle. So in Beings conſider'd as Beings, there is Being in general, Univerſal Being, Being it ſelf, or the Eſſence of Being, as well as this or that Being in particular.

XVII.

Again I conſider, that all other Univerſals or Abſtract Eſſences are really diſtinct from, and exiſt out of thoſe ſingulars whoſe Eſſences they

are. This must of necessity be allow'd, whatever the *Peripatetics* remonstrate to the contrary. Things must exist in *Idea* before they do in *Nature*, otherwise 'twill be impossible to give an intelligible account of the *stability* of *Science*, and of propositions of *Eternal* Truth. But this I have already demonstrated in my * *Metaphysical Essay*, and shall have an occasion further to discourse of it when I come to treat of the *Omniscience* of God. Here therefore supposing it, I say, That as all other Universals or Abstract Essences are really distinct from, and exist out of those Singulars whose Essences they are; so in like manner there is Being it self, or the Essence of Being, really distinct, and separately existing from all particular Beings.

* *Vid.* Collection of *Miscellan.*

XVIII.

And now that the Essence and Idea of God does consist in this *Being it self*, or this *Essence* of *Being*, will be further confirm'd from this Consideration, That as all other Universal Natures or Essences are nothing

thing elſe (as I have already elſe- *Metaph. Eſſay.*
where, and ſhall hereafter again prove) but the Intellect of God, which as variouſly imitable, or participable, exhibits all the general Orders and Natures of things; ſo this Being it ſelf, or this Eſſence of Being, what can it be elſe, but the very Eſſence of God, containing in it the whole Plenitude and Poſſibility of Being, all that is, or can be?

XIX.

And that this is the true Idea and Eſſence of God, to be Being it ſelf, is further plain, becauſe 'tis the firſt conceivable in God. For the proof of this, That it is the firſt conceivable in God, I might appeal to experience. For, let any Contemplative Perſon try whether this be not the firſt thing he conceives when he hears the Name of God. But I demonſtrate it thus. The firſt thing which is conceivable in God, muſt be the firſt thing that can abſolutely be conceiv'd. But Being it ſelf is the firſt thing that can abſolutely be conceiv'd. Therefore Being it

ſelf

ſelf is the firſt thing which is conceivable in God.

XX.

The Aſſumption, I ſuppoſe, will paſs uuqueſtion'd with all. For what can we poſſibly conceive before Being it ſelf? The Propoſition I prove thus. God is the *firſt*; or, there is nothing before God. And therefore the firſt thing which is conceivable in God, muſt be the firſt thing that can *abſolutely* be conceiv'd. Otherwiſe there would be ſomething before God, which is againſt the ſuppoſition. The concluſion therefore follows, That Being it ſelf is the firſt thing which is conceivable in God; and conſequently, that the true Idea God, is Being it ſelf; which was the thing to be proved.

The Uſe of this to Devotion.

IF then God be *Being it ſelf*, there is Infinite reaſon why we ſhould Love, Fear, Reverence, and Adore him. For what an *inlarged*, *indeterminate*, *tranſcendental*, *univerſalized* thing

thing is Being it ſelf! There is a vaſt Amplitude in the degrees of *particular* Beings, and inconceivable almoſt is the diſproportion between an intelligence of the higheſt order, and a peice of *dead impoveriſh'd* matter. But what is this to the diſproportion between the higheſt *particular* Being, nay all the particular Beings that are or can be, and *Being it ſelf*? This is that which *truely is*, all other things are but *ſhadows* and *phantaſms*. Being it ſelf is its own Baſis and Foundation, the *great contrariety* to *nothing*, the ſteddy and inmoſt ſupport and eſtabliſhment of all things that *have Being*, and the fountain of all that *can* be. 'Tis an Ocean without a Shore, a depth without a bottom. In ſhort, 'tis ſuch an *immenſe Amplitude* as a Man cannot duly think of without the profoundeſt impreſſions of awe and reverence, humility and ſelf-annihilation, love and wonder, fear and great joy.

The Aſpiration.

O Thou whoſe Name is *Jehovah*, who art the very Eſſence of Being, who art Being it ſelf, how can I ever ſufficiently Love, Fear, Reverence and Adore thee! Thou art above all the Affections of my *Heart*, all the motions of my *Will*, yea and all the conceptions of my *Underſtanding*. No ſooner do I begin to think of thee, but I am plunged beyond my depth, my thoughts are all ſwallow'd up and overwhelm'd in their firſt Approach to thy Eſſence, and I ſhall ſooner loſe my ſelf than find thee.

O *dreadful Excellence*, I tremble to think of thy Eſſence, my ſoul turns her ſelf from thee, She cannot look forward, She pants, She burns, She languiſhes, is beaten back with the light of thy Glories, and returns to the *familiarity* of her own *Darkneſs*, not becauſe She *chuſes* it, but becauſe She is *Weary*.

O ſoveraign greatneſs, how am I *impoveriſh'd*, how am I *contracted*, how am I *annihilated* in thy Preſence. Thou only art, I am not, Thou art all, I am nothing. But 'tis well, O my God, that I am nothing, ſo thou art all; 'tis well I am not in my ſelf, ſo I am in thee.

O *Being it ſelf*, 'tis in thee that I *live*, *move*, and *have my being*. Out of thee I *am* nothing. I *have* nothing, I can *do* nothing. I am but little and inconſiderable *with* thee, and what then ſhould I be *without* thee? To thee therefore I devote and dedicate my whole ſelf, for I am wholly thine. I will ever live *to* thee, ſince I muſt ever live *in* thee. And oh let my Beloved be ever *Mine*, as I *am*, and ever *will* be *His*. Amen.

Con-

Contemplation II.

That God is a Being absolutely Perfect, proved from the Preceding general Idea of God.

I.

FRom the Eſſences of things flow all their Attributes and Perfections. Having therefore in the preceding Contemplation fix'd the Eſſence and Idea of God in Being it ſelf, I ſhall now in the firſt place hence deduce that he is a Being abſolutely perfect. This has been hitherto taken for the very formal conception and Idea of God, and accordingly has been made the ultimate ground and foundation to prove all his other Perfections, but has rather been *ſuppoſed* than *proved* it ſelf. But now I make this the *firſt general Attribute* of God, to

to be a Being abſolutely Perfect: The proof and deduction of which from his Idea is the concern of the preſent Contemplation.

II.

Let us therefore reaſſume the Idea of God, which if we attend to, we ſhall diſcern that abſolute perfection is vertually involv'd in it, and conſequently that God is a Being abſolutely Perfect. The Idea of God, as we have ſhewn, is Being it ſelf. Now I conſider in the firſt place that Being it ſelf contains in it *all the degrees* of Being, and conſequently *all poſſible Perfection*. The Argument in form runs thus. Whatever has all the degrees of Being has all Perfection.

But Being it ſelf has all the degrees of Being.

Therefore Being it ſelf has all Perfection.

III.

The proof of the firſt propoſition will depend upon this, that *Perfection* is nothing elſe but *degree* of *Being*. If this be once made out, then

then it plainly follows that whatever has all the degrees of Being has all Perfection. Now to prove that Perfection is nothing else but degree of Being, I consider first that all Perfection is by *Addition*. For the more Perfect any thing is, the more it has. But now all Addition is by the Accession of something that *really is*. For *nothing*, though never so often repeated, will add nothing. And therefore Perfection is nothing else but a further degree of Being.

IV.

This I confirm by considering further that every thing is perfect just so far as it *is*, and according to the mode of Being, so is the mode of perfection. Thus vertue is no otherwise the perfection of a Man than as he *is* vertuous, nor strength than as he *is* strong. And so in all other instances according as any thing *is*, so is its Perfection. And so on the contrary, all imperfection is want of Being, and every thing is just so far imperfect as it

is not, ſome way or other. Now if every thing be ſo far perfect or imperfect reſpectively as it either *is*, or *is not*, then it clearly follows that perfection it ſelf is nothing elſe but degree of Being.

V.

Again I conſider, that 'tis impoſſible that perfection ſhould be any thing elſe but degree of Being. For there is nothing in the world but *Being*. If therefore one thing be more perfect than another, it muſt be, it can be for no other reaſon but becauſe it has more degrees of Being, there not being any thing elſe whereby it may exceed. For I think the caſe is here as in *Numbers*. One number excceds another not by any vertue or quality of another kind, but only by the *multiplication* of the *ſame units*. And ſo one Being exceeds, or is more perfect than another, not by any thing which is not *Being*, but *only* by having more *units* or *degrees* of *Being*. Bare, meer Being is as 'twere an *unit*, the loweſt perfection; and

the only way to make it more perfect is *multiplication*, by adding to it more of the same units. And consequently perfection is nothing else but degree of Being.

VI.

This Proposition being sufficiently clear'd, that Perfection is nothing else but a Degree of Being, and consequently the other, that whatever has all the degrees of Being has all Perfection; let us now consider whether Being it self has all the Degrees of Being. That it has so, will thus appear: Being it self is *indeterminate* in being, and consequently has all the degrees of Being. The Argument reduced to Form is this: Whatever is indeterminate in being has all the Degrees of Being.

But Being it self is indeterminate in being: Therefore Being it self has all the degrees of Being.

VII.

And first, that whatever is indeterminate in being has all the degrees of being is certain, for the whole Power and Plenitude of Being can be but

but indeterminate or infinite, there is nothing beyond that, and therefore that which is indeterminate in being, is adequate to the whole Power and Plenitude of Being; and consequently has all the Degrees of Being.

VIII.

And now that Being it self is indeterminate in being is as certain. For what should bound it. Nothing can be bounded but by something that is *before* it: Which I thus demonstrate. To bound or limit a thing is to give it such a definite portion of Being and no more. Now to give such a definite portion of Being and no more, implies giving of Being *Simply*, and that is the same as to be a *Cause*, and every Cause is before the effect, and consequently nothing can be bounded but by something that is before it. But now what is before Being it self? Being it self is the first thing that can be conceiv'd: And therefore as that which is First in any kind, cannot be bounded by any thing in *that*

kind, ſo Being it ſelf, which is *Abſolutely Firſt*, cannot be bounded by any thing at all, becauſe 'tis before all things. Indeed this or that particular Being may well be bounded, becauſe it partakes ſo much and no more of Being it ſelf, or the Eſſence of Being. But Being it ſelf having nothing before it from whence it might receive limits, muſt of neceſſity be unlimited in being, and conſequently have all the Degrees of Being.

IX.

And that Being it ſelf has all the Degrees of Being, I further deduce from this Conſideration; All Abſolute and Univerſal Natures or Eſſences, have all the Perfection of their reſpective Orders and Kinds. And it cannot be otherwiſe, ſince they are *abſtracted* from particular Subjects, whoſe deficiency in *receiving* is the ground of all that defect and imperfection which is in all *Concrete* Entities. Thus this or that particular Muſical Compoſition, or this or that particular Vertuous Man,

Man, are of a limited excellence, becauſe they partake of Harmony and Vertue to ſuch a certain Meaſure. But now ſuppoſe Harmony it ſelf, or Vertue it ſelf, ſhould exiſt Separately in the very *Eſſence*, they would neceſſarily have all the poſſible degrees of *Harmony* and *Vertue*. And accordingly 'tis as reaſonable to conclude that Being it ſelf has all the degrees of Being. Whence it follows, that Being it ſelf has all Perfection, and conſequently that God, who is Being it ſelf, is Abſolutely perfect.

X.

Now if to this it be Objected, That thoſe things which *only are*, are the moſt imperfect, and that therefore Being it ſelf is moſt imperfect; and that therefore if God be Being it ſelf, he will be ſo far from being Abſolutely Perfect, that he will be the moſt imperfect Being of any. I anſwer, That if thoſe things which only are, were therefore imperfect becauſe of the imperfection of *Being Abſolutely*, as the Objection

ſuppoſes, the Conſequence would then be as is objected. But they are therefore only imperfect, becauſe they partake of Abſolute Being, according to its moſt imperfect degree, which is *only* to exiſt. They are not therefore imperfect as they *are*, but as they *are not*. As they *are* they are *Perfect*, for to *be* is to be ſo far Perfect, and to be *Abſolutely* is to be Abſolutely Perfect. God therefore who Abſolutely *is*, is Abſolutely Perfect.

XI.

The ſame Concluſion I further demonſtrate by this Order or Reaſoning: That muſt needs be Abſolutely Perfect which has no imperfection: All imperfection is want of Being, and therefore that muſt needs have no imperfection which is utterly removed from not being, and that muſt needs be utterly removed from not being which has all Being, and that muſt needs have all Being, which is Being it ſelf; and therefore that which is Being it ſelf muſt needs be abſolutely Perfect;

God

God therefore who is Being it ſelf, is alſo an abſolutely Perfect Being. Which was the Propoſition to be proved.

The Uſe of this to Devotion.

IF then Perfection be only degree of Being, and if God be Infinite in Being becauſe being it ſelf, and conſequently has all the degrees of Being, and conſequently all Perfections, it will hence follow, that we own and acknowledge this abſolute Perfection of his by a ſuitable exerciſe of all our Powers and Faculties. For this is but ſtrict Juſtice. And that therefore we contemplate his Superlative Excellence with the deepeſt Awe, Reverence, and Admiration; that we love and deſire him with the full bent and ſpring of our Souls; that we fix and concenter upon him all our Paſſions and Affections; that we make him our end and center, the center of our deſires, and the end of our actions; that we deſpiſe our ſelves and the

whole Creation in compariſon of him; and that laſtly we ſo ſtudy to pleaſe this abſolutely Perfect Being, that we may at laſt be admitted to the glorious communications of his Infinite Perfections.

The Aſpiration.

MY *Lord and my God*, with what awful apprehenſions do I *contemplate* thy Perfections! how am I ſtruck, dazled, and confounded with the light of thy Glories! Thy Being ſtandeth like the *ſtrong Mountains*, and thy Perfections are like the *great deep*. How can I think of thee without wonder and aſtoniſhment, and how can I think of any thing elſe but thee!

O thou Circle of Excellency, thou endleſs Orb of Perfection, where ſhall I begin to *love* thee? Thou art *altogether Lovely*; oh that I were alſo altogether *Love*. My God, I deſire nothing but to love thee, and to be loved by thee. *Thou art all Fair, my Love, there is no ſpot in thee.* My beloved is *Light*,

Light, and in him is *no Darkneſs at all*; *Let him therefore kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth, for his love is better than wine.*

My Great God, how do I deſpiſe my ſelf and the whole Creation when I once think upon thee! *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I deſire in compariſon of thee.* Thou alone doſt ſo fill my Thoughts, ſo raviſh my Affections, that I can *contemplate* nothing but thee, I can *admire* nothing but thee, and I can *love* nothing but thee. Nor do I think my Soul ſtraiten'd in being confined to thee, for thou, O my God art *All.*

O my God, *I have lookt for thee in holineſs, that I might behold this thy power and thy glory.* I can now ſee it but in a *Glaſs darkly*, but thou haſt told us that thoſe who are *pure in heart* ſhall hereafter ſee thee *face to face.* Grant therefore I may ſo *love fear*, and *ſerve* thee here, that I may behold thee, and enjoy thee, *as thou art* in *thy* Infinite Self, for ever hereafter. *Amen.* Pſal. 63.

Con-

Contemplation III.

That therefore all the Perfections of particular Beings exiſt in God, and that after a more excellent manner than they do in particular Beings themſelves.

I.

IN the preceeding Contemplations it has been ſhewn, that the Eſſence and Idea of God conſiſts in Being it ſelf, and that therefore God is a Being abſolutely Perfect. I now further conſider, that from the ſame ground it may be concluded, that all the Perfections of particular Beings exiſt in God, and that after a more excellent manner than they do in particular Beings themſelves. And firſt that all the Perfections of particular Beings do exiſt in God.

II. This

II.

This I collect thus from the Idea of God. If Being it ſelf be therefore abſolutely Perfect becauſe it has all the degrees of Being, as has been proved, then by the ſame proportion it plainly follows, that if Being it ſelf has all the degrees of Being that are in all particular Beings, it muſt have all the Perfection that is in all particular Beings. This conſequence I ſay is undeniable, becauſe Perfection is nothing elſe but degree of Being. And that Being it ſelf has all the degrees of Being that are in all particular Beings, might be ſufficiently concluded from this, That it has all the degrees of Being Simply and Abſolutely; which was proved before. But I further infer it thus:

III.

Being it ſelf is the cauſe of all particular Beings, for all particular Beings are what they are by partaking of Being it ſelf: And if Being it ſelf be the cauſe of all particular Beings, then it muſt be alſo the

the cauſe of all the degrees of Being that are in particular Beings, for theſe can no more riſe up into act from themſelves, than the particular Beings themſelves can. And if Being it ſelf be the cauſe of all the degrees of Being that are in particular Beings, then it muſt have in it ſelf all thoſe degrees; for nothing can communicate what it has not. The ſhort is, Whatever is in the effect muſt pre-exiſt ſome way or other in *that* cauſe upon which it *wholly depends*. But now if Being it ſelf be the cauſe of all the degrees of Being that are in particular Beings, then particular Beings *wholly depend* upon Being it ſelf; and conſequently whatever Perfection is in particular Beings, muſt exiſt in Being it ſelf, which was the firſt propoſition to be proved.

IV.

The next is, That the Perfections of particular Beings do exiſt in God after a more excellent manner than they do in the particular Beings themſelves. For the Prerogative of God

God above his Creatures does not consist meerly in this, That there are more Perfections in God than he ever *did*, or *will*, or *can* communicate to his Creatures, but that he has also those very Perfections which they have in a more eminent manner.

V.

There is indeed a great deal of Perfection and Beauty in the World, enough to affect the *Curious* with the greatest *Pleasure*, and the *Religious* with the greatest *Devotion*. And therefore St. *Austin* discoursing upon that place of St. *Paul* to the *Romans*, where the *Gentiles* are said to know God, but yet not to glorifie him as God; *Whence could they know him?* says he, *From the things which he has made? For do but ask the Beauty of the Sea, ask the Beauty of the dilated and diffused Air, ask the Beauty of the Heavens, ask the Order of the Stars, ask the Sun clarifying the Day with his Brightness, ask the Moon tempering the darkness of the following Night with her Splendor,* Serm. 149.

dor, ask the Animals which move in the Waters, on the Earth, and in the Air. The Souls which lie hid, the Bodies that are perſpicuous, the viſible things that are to be govern'd, and the inviſible Governors; Ask all theſe, they will all of them give Anſwer, Behold, look upon us, we are Fair. Their Beauty is their Confeſſion. Who made theſe Mutable Fairs, but the Immutable Fair? But he that would be more ſenſibly affected with the Beauty of the Univerſe, let him conſult that excellent Draught which the *Roman* Orator has given of it, which I take to be as fine a *Deſcription* as ever was made, either by *his*, or any *other* Pen.

De Nat. Deorum. Lib. 2.

VI.

And 'tis highly reaſonable, that there ſhould be a great deal of Beauty in the Creation, ſince the World was made by him who is Being it ſelf, and conſequently Beauty it ſelf, and who muſt needs imprint his *own likeneſs* upon the things which he has made. For if God muſt have all the Perfections which are in the Crea-

Creature, then God can communicate no other Perfections to the Creature than what he has himſelf, (he himſelf having all) and conſequently the Creature muſt partake of the likeneſs of God. And therefore it may be ſaid, That God made not only Man, but the whole World, in a larger ſenſe, after his own Image: and as Art imitates Nature, ſo Nature imitates God. The ſhort is, If God has *All* of the Creature, then the Creature muſt have *ſomething* of God, and therefore muſt in ſome degree reſemble him. And ſays *Plato* in his *Timæus*, πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα ἐβουλήθη γένεσθαι παραπλήσια αὐτῷ. *He would have all things come as nigh himſelf as might be.* And to the ſame effect *Aquinas*, *Res omnes Creatæ ſunt quædam imagines primi Agentis*; *All created things are certain Images of the firſt Agent.* *Lib. 3. Con. Gent. cap. 19.*

VII.

But tho' Nature imitates God, yet it happens here, as in moſt other imitations, the *Extract* comes far ſhort of the *Original.* God does not

not only excel the Creatures in having degrees of Being, which he will not, cannot communicate to them, but also in having their Perfections in a more excellent manner than they have themselves. Thus that Beauty which charms the Eyes of the Amorous, exists more excellently in God than in the sweetest Face which they admire. And that Harmony which dissolves the Soul into Raptures and Extasies, has a much more perfect Existence in God than in the most agreeable Sounds that can possibly conspire together. The Creature is very unlike God, even where it resembles him, and accordingly the Scripture sometimes makes mention of a likeness that is between God and his Creatures, as when it says, *Let us make man after our own likeness.* Again at another time it utterly disowns it, as when it says, *To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him?*

Gen. 1.

Isai. 40. 18.

VIII. And

VIII.

And that things ſhould thus fall ſhort of God, even in that very reſpect wherein they reſemble him, is no more than what Reaſon will conclude neceſſary. For God being the very Eſſence of Being, or Being it ſelf, and therefore indeterminate in Being, and therefore alſo in Perfection, it follows that he has not only all Kinds of Perfection, but that every Kind of Perfection which he has muſt needs be as excellent as is poſſible in that Kind. Thus for inſtance, The Beauty that is in God muſt be as perfect as 'tis poſſible for *Beauty to be*, and ſo the Harmony that is in God muſt be as perfect as 'tis poſſible for *Harmony to be*. That is in other words, The Beauty which is in God muſt be *Beauty it ſelf*, and the Harmony which is in God muſt be *Harmony it ſelf*.

IX.

But now 'tis impoſſible that things ſhould exiſt in the Creature after ſuch a rate as this. As they are not Being it ſelf, but Particular Beings, ſo

every Perfection that is in them is not that *Perfection it ſelf*, in the *Abſtract*, but only *Particular*, *Derivative* and *Concrete*. They are Beautiful and Harmonical, but not Beauty it ſelf, not Harmony it ſelf. *Beauty it ſelf* can no more be Communicated to the Creature than *Being it ſelf* can. All the Eſſences and Abſtract Natures of things are in *God*, or rather the very ſame with God (as I ſhall ſhew when I conſider the Omniſcience of God) and they are but *One*, they cannot be *Communicated*, or *Multiplied*. Their *Images* indeed may, but they themſelves cannot, for they are the ſame with God. There may be many Beautiſuls, or Particular Beauties, but there can be but one Beauty it ſelf.

X.

The Beauty therefore that is in the Creature is only a ſlender Shadow or Reflection of that Beauty it ſelf which is in God, who is the Idea or Eſſence of Beauty. And as it is Derivative from it, ſo it exiſts continually by it, and in it, and is every way

way as much depending upon it as the Reflexion in the Glaſs is upon the Face whoſe Reflexion it is. And as Beauty has a more excellent way of exiſtence in the Face it ſelf, than in the Glaſs, ſo has it a far more perfect way of ſubſiſting in God than in any Face or thing whatſoever. For all things are Reflections from him, and the whole Creation is but as 'twere one great *Mirrour* or *Glaſs* of the *Divinity*.

XI.

I end this Contemplation with a very remarkable paſſage to this purpoſe out of St. *Auſtin*. Tu ergo Domine feciſti ea qui pulcher es, pulchra ſunt enim. Qui bonus es, bona ſunt enim. Qui es, ſunt enim. Nec ita pulchra ſunt, nec ita bona ſunt, nec ita ſunt ſicut tu Conditor eorum, cui Comparata, nec pulchra ſunt, nec bona ſunt, nec ſunt. *Thou therefore O Lord haſt made theſe things, who art fair, for they are fair. Who art good, for they are good. Who Art, for they are. But neither are they ſo fair, neither are they ſo good,* *Lib. 11 Confeſ. cap. 4.*

neither are they ſo as Thou their Maker, in Compariſon of whom, they are neither fair, nor good, nor are they at all.

The Uſe of this to Devotion.

THis may be very much improv'd to the advantage of Devotion. For the great Let to Devotion is our Love of *Particular* and *Senſible* good. 'Tis a Charge that may be faſten'd upon the beſt of us all, more or leſs, that we are *Lovers of Pleaſure more than Lovers of God.* And the Love of Pleaſure Naturally alienates us from the Love of God.

Joh. 2. 15. And therefore ſays St. *John*, *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.* And to ſhew the great inconſiſtency that is between the Love of the World and the Love of God, he further tells us, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* But now if we could be but once perſwaded that all the Perfections of Particular Beings exiſt in God,

God, and not only ſo, but after a more excellent manner than they do in Particular Beings themſelves, we ſhould certainly be very much taken off from the love of Particular and Senſible good; we ſhould not be ſuch groſs Idolaters as we are in adoring Created Beauty, but ſhould adhere to God with more Unity and intireneſs of Affection. Sure I am that there is great Reaſon we ſhould do ſo, when we conſider, that let the good of the Creature be never ſo Charming, the very ſame we may find in God with greater Perfection. We can propoſe nothing to our ſelves in the Creature, but what God has more *perfectly* and more *abundantly*. To what purpoſe then ſhould we go off from him, ſince Change it ſelf can give us no variety, and we can only *Court* a *New Object*, not *find* a *New Happineſs*.

The Aſpiration.

NO, *My Fair Delight*, I will never be drawn off from the Love of thee by the Charms of any of thy Creatures. Thou art not only infinitely more excellent than they, but haſt their very excellencies in a more perfect manner than they have or can have. What Temptation then can I have to leave thee? No, O my Faireſt, I want Temptation to recommend my Love to thee. 'Tis too eaſie and too cheap a fidelity to adhere to thee, My firſt Love, when by Changing I can gain no more.

Thou, O Soveraign Fair, haſt adorn'd thy Creation with a Tincture of thy Brightneſs, thou haſt ſhin'd upon it with the light of thy Divine Glory, and haſt pour'd forth thy Beauty upon all thy Works. But they are not Fair as Thou art Fair, their Beauty is not as Thy Beauty. Thou art Fairer, O my God,

Pſal. 45.

God, than the Children of Men, or the Orders of Angels, and the *Arrows* of thy Love are *Sharper* than theirs. They are indeed, My God, *thy Arrows are very Sharp*, and were we not too ſecurely fenc'd about with our thick Houſes of Clay, would wound us deeper than the Keeneſt Charms of any Created Beauties. But theſe every day Wound us, while we ſtand proof againſt thy Divine Artillery, becauſe theſe are *Senſible*, and thine only *Intelligible*, theſe are viſible to our *Eyes*, thine only to our *Minds*, which we ſeldome convert to the Contemplation of thy Beauties. Pſal. 45.

But, O thou Infinite Fair, did we but once *taſte and ſee*, did we but Contemplate thy Original Beauty, as we do thoſe faint Images of it that are reflected up and down among our fellow Creatures, as thy Charms infinitely exceed theirs, ſo would our Love to thee be *Wonderful, paſſing the Love of Women.*

Contemplation IV.

Of the Attributes of God in general; particularly of the Unity of God: which is proved from his Idea.

I.

CONcerning the Attributes of God in general, I have no more to offer than what is commonly taught in the Schools; from which I find no reaſon to vary, and of which this I think is the ſumm and ſubſtance, *firſt*, That the Eſſence of God is in it ſelf, one only general, ſimple and intire Perfection, and that therefore the Divine Attributes are not to be conſider'd as Accidents *really* diſtinct from the Divine Eſſence, and if not from the Divine Eſſence, then not from themſelves neither.

II. But

II.

But however, *Secondly*, Since this Divine Eſſence which in it ſelf is one and the ſame general Perfection, does exert and diſplay it ſelf variouſly in its Operations, by reaſon of the Diverſity of Objects, the Attributes of God are by us conceiv'd diſtinctly. Not that they are ſo in reſpect of God, with whom they are really one and the ſame, and conſequently ſo alſo among themſelves, but only with reſpect to our manner of conception.

III.

For, *Thirdly*, The Eſſence of God diſplays it ſelf variouſly (as was obſerv'd before) according to the diverſity of Objects. But now the narrowneſs of our Faculties will not permit us to repreſent ſuch a various and manifold *diſplay* of Perfection in one, ſimple and adequate conception. We are fain therefore to ſupply this defect, by framing ſeveral *inadequate* conceptions, whereby we repreſent God partially and imperfectly; and which we found upon

upon his different Operations; every one of which is conceiv'd as proceeding from a different Perfection in God, correſponding to that particular Operation.

IV.

Now tho' this diverſity be not real with reſpect to God, who is one and the ſame Nature, without compoſition or complication of Being, but only with reſpect to variety of Objects and Modes of Operation, yet this is a ſufficient ground for diſtinct conceptions; every one of which may admit of a peculiar definition or explication. The ſumm is, The Attributes of God are all one and the ſame as to the *thing ſignifi'd*, but not as to the *manner* of *ſignification*. Or, to word it more Scholaſtically, they may be mutually affirm'd of one another *in ſenſu identico*, but not *in ſenſu formali*. And thus muſt we be contented to think and talk of God while we ſee him here in a Glaſs darkly, till he ſhall reveal himſelf to us more perfectly, and we ſhall ſee him as he is,

and

and know him as we our ſelves are known.

V.

This being premiſed concerning the Attributes of God in general, I proceed now to Contemplate ſome of thoſe particular Attributes of his, which may derive the greateſt influence upon our Piety and Devotion. And among theſe, I firſt conſider the *Unity* of God, by which I underſtand not a Generical, or Specifical, but a *Numerical Unity*, in oppoſition to Plurality or Multiplication. That is, That there is One, and but One Onely God.

VI.

The *Unity* of God has been ever more queſtion'd than his *Exiſtence*, and there have always been more *Polytheiſts* than *Atheiſts*. But for my part, I ſhould ſooner be an *Atheiſt* than a *Polytheiſt*, for I think it a greater abſurdity, that there ſhould be more Gods than one, than that there ſhould be none at all. And I can't imagine how ſuch a wretched abſurdity as *Polytheiſm* ſhould

ſhould ever obtain ſo much as it has both in the *Gentile* and *Chriſtian* World, ſince without the aſſiſtance of any other conſiderations, it may abundantly be refuted and concluded impoſſible from the very Idea and Formal conception of God.

VII.

The Idea of God, is Being it ſelf, and Being it ſelf can be but One; which I thus demonſtrate. Whatſoever is Infinite in Being, can be but One, but Being it ſelf is Infinite in Being; therefore Being it ſelf can be but One. That Being it ſelf is Infinite in Being, we have prov'd in the Second Contemplation. The *Propoſition*, That whatſoever is Infinite in Being can be but One, is plain. For if there were *more* Infinites, one muſt be *diſtinguiſh'd* from another, otherwiſe they could not be more: for not to be *diſtinguiſh'd*, is to be the *ſame*. And if one muſt be diſtinguiſh'd from another, then one muſt have ſome degree of Being which the other has not: For by what elſe can any thing be diſtinguiſh'd?

guiſh'd? And if one muſt have ſome degree of Being, which the other has not, then to every one of theſe ſuppoſed Infinites, ſome degree of Being muſt be wanting, namely, that whereby they are deſtinguiſh'd. And if ſo, then none of them would be infinite in Being. Therefore Plurality of Infinites in Being, is a contradictious ſelf inconſiſtant Notion, and ſuch as cannot be admitted by any perſon that knows what he affirms.

VIII.

But further, Being it ſelf has all the degrees of Being, as all other Abſtract and univerſal Natures have all the perfection of their reſpective Orders. But now what has all the degrees of Being cannot poſſibly be multiplied. For 'tis a flat contradiction that more than one ſhould have all the degrees of Being. Indeed it may be *communicated*, and there may reſult as many Particular and Derivative Beings, as Being it ſelf is capable of being *Participated*. But it cannot be *multiplied*, becauſe it has all the degrees of

of Being. And thus 'tis in all other Abſtract Eſſences, they may be *Communicated*, but they can't be *multiplied*. Thus there may be many Particular Beauties by the various participation of Beauty it ſelf. But ſuppoſe Beauty it ſelf to exiſt, it could not be multiplied; there can be but one Beauty it ſelf, becauſe it has all the degrees of Perfection belonging to its Nature. And beyond all there is nothing.

IX.

For to him that would add another Beauty it ſelf, I would propoſe this Queſtion. Has this ſuperadded Beauty all the Perfection of the firſt, or has it not? If not, then 'tis not Beauty it ſelf, for that is ſuppoſed to have all the Perfection belonging to Beauty. If it has, then 'tis the very ſame with the other, and conſequently 'tis impoſſible there ſhould be any more than one Beauty it ſelf. And why is the multiplication of *Individuals* impoſſible, but only for this reaſon, becauſe every Individual has all the Per-

Perfection belonging to *that Individuated Nature.* Which therefore does not admit of Plurality or Multiplication. And consequently Being it self having as much all the degrees of Being as any Individual has all the Perfection of that Individuated Nature, is no more capable of Plurality or Multiplication than any Individual is. There is therefore but one Being it self, and therefore but one God. Which was the thing to be prov'd.

The use of this to Devotion.

SInce then there can be but one God, as we have reason in the first place to admire and adore that universal Perfection of his Nature, which renders him *uncapable* of *multiplication*, so in the next place we may be hence admonish'd how reasonable it is that we should rest and depend wholly upon him, disclaiming and renouncing all false Gods. And that lastly, we should love him intirely and undividedly, with

with all our Heart, Mind and Strength, without admitting any other into Partnerſhip or Rivalſhip with him: which unity and intireneſs of Devotion we could not maintain, were there more Gods than one. For no one could then have right to exact all our ſervices, nor could we be obliged, or able, to direct all our ſervices to any *one* of them. And much leſs could we do ſo to *all*, ſince (as our Saviour tells us) *no man can ſerve* even *two maſters*. Mat. 6. 24.

The Aſpiration.

O Thou Mighty *One-All*, who art too *great* to be *multiplied*, and yet too *full* not to be *communicated*, what a *Greatneſs*, what a *Fulneſs* is this of thine! O *Rich Solitude*, how unlike is all Created Excellence to thine! Other things are to be admired for their *Numbers*, Thou for thy *oneneſs* and *ſingularity*, they glory in their *multitudes*,

tudes, but 'tis the Prerogative of thy Perfection to be *Alone*.

In thee, my only Centre, I reſt, upon thee I wholly depend, for I have none in Heaven but thee, and none upon Earth in compariſon of thee. I utterly renounce therefore all abſolute Power and Supremacy beſides thine, and I will fear none but thee, and obey none but thee. Thou only ſhalt have Dominion over me, I am only thine, and thee only will I ſerve.

Many, O God, are the Beauties which thou haſt made, and thy whole Creation is fill'd with thy Glory. *There are threeſcore Queens, and fourſcore Concubines, and Virgins without number*; But *my love, my undefiled, is but one.* Take then to thy ſelf the Empire of my Heart. For all that deſerves the name of Love there ſhall be thine. O that it were more inlarged for thy reception: But thou ſhalt have it *all*, and I will love thee with my whole Heart, though that whole be but *little*. Cant. 6.

O my only Delight, other Gods beſides thee, and other Lords beſides thee, have often uſurp'd a Dominion over me. But *my Heart is* now *fix'd, O God, my Heart is fix'd.* It is fix'd upon thee, and how can it ever wander out of the Sphere of thy Beauty! Or what Beauty is there whoſe influence may vye with thine? Or how can I love any but one, when that one, and none but that one, is Infinitely Lovely.

Contemplation V.

Of the Omniſcience and Omnipreſence of God.

I.

THE unity of God I have demonſtrated in the preceding Contemplation. And now to obviate a ſcruple that may thence ariſe, namely, how one ſingle ſolitary Being ſhould be ſufficient to preſide over all the *Motions* of the *Natural*, and all the *Affairs* of the *Moral* World, I thought it convenient to proceed next to ſome of thoſe Attributes, which, when well conſider'd, will make it plain, that this Being, though but *one*, is abundantly qualifi'd for the Government and Management of the whole Univerſe. And among theſe, the *Omniſcience* and *Omnipreſence* of God are moſt eminent and conſpicuous,

which I ſhall here therefore joyntly Contemplate.

II.

And firſt of the *Omniſcience* of God. This is a moſt wonderful and amazing Attribute, conſider it which way we will, for it denotes no leſſe than a full knowledge and thorough comprehenſion of all the things that either are, have been, or ſhall be. But in the way that I ſhall now conſider it, 'twill appear clothed with peculiar Circumſtances of Admiration, and is indeed a Theme more fit for the Contemplation of an Angel, than for the Pen of a mortal Theoriſt. Here therefore I muſt beg the peculiar Attention of my Reader, and above all the peculiar aſſiſtance of that Spirit which *ſearcheth all things, yea, the* 1 Cor. 2. *Deep things of God.*

III.

Now in treating of God's Omniſcience, I ſhall do two things, Firſt, prove that he is Omniſcient, Secondly, repreſent the manner of his Omniſcience. To ſhew that God

God is Omniſcient, I muſt firſt conſider what *Knowledge* is in general. Now this I define to be in ſhort, a *Comprehenſion of Truth.* For the clearer underſtanding of which, the Diſtinction of Truth muſt be attended to. Truth then is either of the Object, or of the Subject. And both theſe are again ſubdivided. For Truth of the Object is either Simple, whereby a Being is really what it is. Or Complex, which denotes thoſe neceſſary Habitudes or Reſpects, whereby one thing ſtands affected toward another as to Affirmation or Negation. Then as for Truth of the Subject, we underſtand by it either a juſt Conformity between the Underſtanding and the Object, which is *Logical* Truth, or between the Words and the Underſtanding, which is *Moral* Truth or Veracity.

IV.

The Truth with which we are here concern'd, is Truth of the Object. For to know is ſo to comprehend things both as to their Simple

Natures, and as to their Habitudes and Relations, as to Compound what is really Compounded, and to Divide what is really Divided. To have our Understandings thus accommodated to the Respects and Habitudes of things, is *Knowledge*. As for Truth of the Subject in the second sense, as it signifies a Conformity between the Words and the Understanding, we have here nothing to do with it, as being altogether foreign to our present purpose. And in the first acceptation, as it signifies a just conformity between the Understanding and the Object, 'tis but another word for *Knowledge*. For Truth of the Subject in this sense is the conformity of the Mind to Truth of the Object. And so also is Knowledge. To Know therefore, is to think of things conformally to their Simple Natures and Mutual Habitudes, or, as I first defined it, to *Comprehend Truth*.

V. This

V.

This being premiſed, That Knowledge is nothing elſe but a Comprehenſion of Truth, that is, the having things in the *Mind* with the ſame Relations of Compoſition or Diviſiſion, as they ſtand mutually affected in *themſelves*, I thus argue: That Being which Comprehends all Truth is Omniſcient.

But God Comprehends all Truth.

Therefore God is Omniſcient.

The firſt Propoſition is plain from the Definition of Knowledge. The Concluſion therefore depends wholly upon the proof of the Second; namely, that God comprehends all Truth.

VI.

Now for the Demonſtration of this Propoſition, I deſire but this one *Poſtulatum*, that there are Eternal and Neceſſary Truths, that is, that there are eternal and immutable Relations and Habitudes of things toward one another, by way of Affirmation or Negation. This is what, I ſuppoſe, any body will give

me for the *asking*, tho I have no great reaſon to be over-thankful for it, it being a thing ſo very unqueſtionable, and withal a Propoſition of this *unlucky* Quality, that 'tis as much eſtabliſh'd by the Denial of it, as by the Affirming it. For ſhould any Sceptical Perſon be ſo hardy as to ſay that there is no ſuch thing as Eternal and Neceſſary Truth, I would ask him this Queſtion: Was that Propoſition always true, or was it not? If it was not always true, then there was once Eternal and Neceſſary Truth, and if once ſo; then ever ſo: But if it was always True, then by his own Confeſſion, there is ſuch a thing as Eternal and Neceſſary Truth. This therefore muſt be allow'd.

VII.

It being therefore ſuppoſed that there are Eternal and Neceſſary Truths, the next Propoſition that I ſhall lay down is this, that the ſimple Eſſences of things muſt be alſo Eternal and Neceſſary. For the proof of which Propoſition

on I conſider firſt, that as Truth of the Subject depends upon, and neceſſarily ſuppoſes Truth of the Object, ſo Truth of the Object Complex depends upon, and neceſſarily ſuppoſes Truth of the Object Simple: That is in other Words, The Habitudes and Relations of Simple Eſſences, depend upon and neceſſarily ſuppoſe the Reality of their reſpective Simple Eſſences. As therefore there can be no ſuch thing as Truth of the Subject, without Truth of the Object, to which it may be conformable; ſo neither can there be Truth of the Object Complex without Truth of the Object Simple, that is, there can be no mutual Habitudes or Relations of things as to Affirmation or Negation, without the Reality of the things themſelves.

VIII.

For I conſider that theſe Habitudes and Reſpects, as to Affirmation or Negation, wherein conſiſts objective Truth Complex, do reſult from the Simple Eſſences, and

can

can no more ſubſiſt by themſelves than any other relations can; for the exiſtence of which the Schools themſelves make it neceſſary that they have their *ſubject* and *term*, upon the Poſition of which they immediately reſult, and upon the deſtruction of which they as immediately ceaſe. As other relations therefore cannot ſubſiſt without the exiſtence of *ſubject* and *term*, ſo neither can theſe habitudes as to Affirmation or Negation, ſubſiſt without the real exiſtence of the *Eſſences* themſelves ſo related.

IX.

But this perhaps will be better illuſtrated by a particular Inſtance. Let then this be the objective Truth Complex, *Two Circles touching one another inwardly cannot have the ſame common Centre.* This is a true Propoſition. But I here demand, How can it poſſibly have this certain habitude of Diviſion or Negation, unleſs there be two ſuch diſtinct ſimple Eſſences as Circle and Centre. Certainly there can be no Reference

or

or Relation where there is nothing real to ſupport it.

X.

This Point therefore being gain'd, That truth of the Object Complex depends upon, and neceſſarily ſuppoſes truth of the Object Simple, and that there can be no mutual habitudes or relations of Eſſences, as to compoſition and diviſition, without the Simple Eſſences themſelves: hence it will neceſſarily follow, that whenſoever the one does exiſt, the other muſt exiſt alſo; and conſequently, if the one be Eternal, the other muſt be alſo Eternal. And thus (to recur to the former Inſtance) if this be a Propoſition of Eternal Truth, *viz. Two Circles touching one another inwardly cannot have the ſame common Centre*, then the two diſtinct Simple Eſſences of Circle and Centre muſt have an eternal and neceſſary exiſtence. The ſhort is, there can be no connexion or relation between things that are not, or that do not exiſt, for being with this or that habitude to another

another thing, implies *ſimple Being*, and for one thing to be another, infers and ſuppoſes it *to be ſimply*. And if there can be no connexion or relation between things that are not, then alſo there can be no *Eternal* connexion or relation between things that have not an *Eternal* Exiſtence. For things cannot be related before they are. But there are ſuch Eternal habitudes and relations, therefore the ſimple Eſſences of things are alſo Eternal. Which was the Propoſition next to be proved.

XI.

I know very well this is not according to the *Decrees* of the *Peripatetic* School, which has long ſince condemn'd it as Heretical Doctrine, to ſay, that the Eſſences of things do exiſt from Eternity. But I have Meditated much upon theſe things, and I muſt needs ſay, that I think it a very certain and very uſeful Theorem, and that 'tis utterly impoſſible to give an intelligible account of the *Stability* of *Science*, or how there ſhould be *Propoſitions* of *Eternal*

Eternal Truth, but upon this Hypotheſis. And I ſhould be thankful to any of the *Peripatetic Diſſenters* who would undertake to ſhew me how there may.

XII.

I know they endeavour to do it by telling us (and 'tis the only Plea they have to offer) that theſe habitudes are not attributed *abſolutely* to the ſimple Eſſences as in actual being, but only *Hypothetically*, that whenſoever they ſhall exiſt, they ſhall alſo carry ſuch relations to one another. There is, ſays the Peripatetic, only a *conditional* connexion between the Subject and the Predicate, not an *abſolute* poſition of either. This goes ſmoothly down with the young Scholar at his *Logic Lecture*, and the Tutor applauds his diſtinction, and thinks he has thereby quitted his hands of a very *dangerous Hereſie*.

XIII.

But now to this I return the ſame Anſwer (for I need give no other) that I have in my *Metaphyſical Eſſay*.

Firſt,

First, I say, that these habitudes are not (as is supposed) only by way of Hypothesis, but absolutely attributed to the simple Essences, as actually existing. For, when I say, for instance, that every part of a Circle is equally distant from the Centre; this Proposition does not hang in *suspence*, then to be actually verifi'd when the things shall exist in *Nature*, but is at *present* actually true, as actually true as ever it will or can be; and consequently I may thence infer, that the things themselves already are. There is no necessity, I confess, they should exist in *Nature*, which is all that the Objection proves, but *exist* they must. For of nothing there can be no affection.

XIV.

But, *Secondly*, Suppose I grant what the Objector would have, that these habitudes are not absolutely attributed to the simple Essences, but only by way of Hypothesis. Yet I don't see what he can gain by this concession. For certainly thus much

much at leaſt is attributed to the ſimple Eſſences at *preſent*, that whenſoever they *ſhall* exiſt, ſuch and ſuch habitudes will attend them. I ſay, thus much is attributed *actually*, and at *preſent*. But now let any Peripatetic of 'em all tell me how any thing can any way be ſaid of that which is not. And beſides, 'tis a weak evaſion to ſay that things are not related thus or thus as actually exiſting, but only conditionally, ſuppoſing their exiſtence. For I deny that any thing can be any way related that does *not actually exiſt*. And 'tis as good as a contradiction to ſay otherwiſe. When therefore the Peripatetick talks of a *conditional connexion* between the Subject and the Predicate, and that neither is put *abſolutely*, I ſay, that the connexion is as abſolute as it can or ever will be, and that a non-exiſting ſubject cannot have any Predicate, or be any way related. And all this I bind upon him by a principle of his own, that *of nothing there can be no affection*. And let him unwind himſelf if he can.

XV. Ha-

XV.

Having thus far clear'd our way by making it evident, that the ſimple Eſſences of things are Eternal. The next thing that I conſider is, that ſince they are not Eternal in their *Natural ſubſiſtencies*, they muſt be Eternal in ſome other way of ſubſiſting. And that muſt be in ſome underſtanding, or by way of *Ideal ſubſiſtence.*

XVI.

For there are but two conceivable ways how any thing may exiſt, either *out* of all underſtanding, or *within* ſome underſtanding. If therefore the ſimple Eſſences of things are Eternal, but not *out* of all underſtanding, it remains they muſt have an Eternal exiſtence in ſome underſtanding. Which is what I call an *Ideal ſubſiſtence.* There is therefore another way of exiſting beſides that in *Rerum Natura*, namely in the *Mundus Archetypus*, or the Ideal World, where all the *Rationes rerum*, or ſimple Eſſences of things have an Eternal and Immutable exiſtence,

iſtence, before ever they enter upon the Stage of Nature.

XVII.

I further conſider, That this underſtanding wherein the ſimple Eſſences of things have an Eternal exiſtence, muſt be an Eternal underſtanding. For an Eſſence can no more Eternally exiſt in a Temporary underſtanding, than a Body can be infinitely extended in a finite ſpace. Now this Eternal underſtanding can be no other than the underſtanding of God. The ſimple Eſſences of things therefore do Eternally exiſt in the underſtanding of God.

XVIII.

But the mode of this muſt be further explain'd. For it being an unqueſtion'd Truth, that God is a ſimple and uncompounded Being; and conſequently, that there is nothing in God that is not God himſelf: as the Schools alſo rightly have pronounc'd, We muſt not conceive theſe ſimple Eſſences as accidents inhering in God, or as Beings really

distinct from God, this not comporting with the *ſimplicity* of the Divine Nature.

XIX.

Theſe ſimple Eſſences of things therefore can be nothing elſe but the Divine Eſſence it ſelf conſider'd with his Connotation, as variouſly repreſentative or exhibitive of things, and as variouſly imitable or participable by them. As the Divine Eſſence is thus or thus imitable or partakeable, ſo are the Eſſences of things diſtinguiſh'd *ſpecifically* one from another; and according to the *multifariouſneſs* of this Imitability, ſo are the *poſſibilities* of Being. From the degrees of this Imitability, are the *orders* and degrees of Being, and from the variety of it, is their *multiplicity*.

XX.

The ſimple Eſſences of things, thus exiſting in the Divine Eſſence, according to theſe modes of Imitability and Participation, are what we are taught in the *Platonic School* to call *Idea's*. Theſe, in the Language

guage of the Divine Philoſopher, are πρῶτα νοητὰ, *the firſt Intelligibles*, and τῶν ὄντων μέτρα, *the meaſures of the things that are*, and τὰ ἀληθινῶς ὄντα, *the things that truly are*, and ἀιώνια παραδείγματα, *Eternal patterns*, and ἀεὶ ταῦτα ϗ ὡσαύτως ἔχοντα, *things which are always the ſame and unchangeable*, and τὰ μὴ γιγνόμενα, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ὄντα, *things that are not generated, but are always*; and again μήτε γιγνόμενα, μήτε ἀπολλύμενα, *that were neither generated, nor will be deſtroyed.* Concerning which, thus *Cicero*, *Hæc Plato negat ſigni, ſed ſemper eſſe, & ratione & Intelligentia contineri. Theſe*, Plato *denies ever to have been generated, but that they always are, and are contain'd in Reaſon and Intelligence.*

XXI.

Further, Theſe Eſſences of things, or Ideas thus exiſting in God, are the true and proper Objects of all Sciences, and (if I may uſe the Apoſtle's expreſſion in another caſe) στύλος ϗ ἑδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας, *the pillar and ground of truth.* Theſe ſuppoſed, 1 Tim. c. 3.

ſuppoſed, 'tis eaſie to account for the Stability of Science, and for Propoſitions of Eternal Truth, but without them 'tis abſolutely impoſſible. For all things in their Natural Subſiſtencies are Temporary, Flux, Mutable and Corruptible, and what is ſo can never ſtand under Eternal and Immutable relations.

XXII.

Further, Theſe Eſſences are the *Specifical Models* and *Platforms* of all the things that are in this *Ectypal* World. According to theſe Eternal Exemplars were they made; and as is their Conformity to theſe Meaſures, ſo is their Perfection. For 'tis impoſſible that God ſhould make a World with Counſel and Deſign, unleſs he make it according to ſomething, and that can be nothing elſe but ſomething exiſting within himſelf, ſomething in this *Ideal* and *Archetypal* World. For as *Aquinas* well obſerves, *In all things that are not made by chance, the Form muſt neceſſarily be the end of Generation. But now the Agent does not act for the Form,*

Form, but only as far as the Similitude of the Form is in him. Prim. Part. Q. 15. Ar. Prim.

XXIII.

And what if I ſhould further ſay, that this Ideal World, this Eſſence of God conſider'd as variouſly exhibitive and repreſentative of things, is no other than the Divine λογος, ths Second Perſon in the ever Bleſſed Trinity. This I think highly agreeable to Reaſon, for I know of no Hypotheſis that would ſo intelligibly make out the Eternal Generation of the Son of God; For according to this account, the Son of God muſt be a *Subſtantial* and *Multifarious thought* of God the Father, and how this may be *generated*, and yet be *co-eternal* with God the Thinker, is not very hard to conceive. Since, if an Angel had been Eternal, his thought muſt have been ſo too.

XXVI.

I ſhall add in confirmation of this Notion, a ſignal paſſage of the great Platoniſt *Marſilius Ficinus*, thus diſcourſing of the Eternal Generation

of the Son of God. *Omnis vita prolem ſuam*, &c. *Every Life firſt generates its offspring within it ſelf before it does abroad without it ſelf, and by how much the more excellent the Life is, by ſo much the more inwardly to its ſelf does it generate its offspring. So the vegetative life both in Trees and in Animals generates firſt the Seed, and the Animal within its own Body, before it caſts forth either abroad. So the Senſitive, which is more excellent than the Vegetative life, brings forth by the fancy an Image or Intention of things in it ſelf, before it moves the Members, and forms them in External Matter. But this firſt Birth of the fancy, becauſe 'tis in the very Soul, is therefore nearer to the Soul than the Birth of the Vegetative life, which is not in the Soul, but in the Body. So again, the Rational life, which is more excellent than the Senſitive, brings forth in it ſelf the Reaſon both of things, and of it ſelf, as it were an offspring, before it brings it into the light, either by Speech or Action. This firſt Birth of Reaſon is*

Tom. 1. pag. 18. cap. 13.

nearer

nearer to the Soul than the Birth of Fancy. For the Rational Power is reflected upon its own Birth, and by that upon it ſelf, by ſeeking, knowing, and loving its own act and it ſelf, which is not done by the Fancy. So again, the Angelical life, which is more excellent than the Rational, brings forth in it ſelf, by a kind of Divine Inſtinct, the Notions of it ſelf and of things, before it diſcharges them upon the Matter of the World. This Birth is more interior to an Angel, than Reaſon is to her, becauſe 'tis neither derived from External Objects, nor changed. Wherefore the Divine life being the moſt eminent and fruitful of all, muſt needs generate an Offspring more like her ſelf than any of the reſt: and this it generates in it ſelf by underſtanding, before it brings forth any thing without. God therefore perfectly underſtanding himſelf, and in himſelf all things, he conceives in himſelf a perfect Notion of himſelf, and of all things, which is the equal and full Image of God, and the more than full Exemplar or Pattern of the World, &c.

XXV.

Thus is this Notion of the Ideal World, or of the Eſſence of God, being variouſly exhibitive and repreſentative of the Eſſences of things, made uſe of by this *great Theoriſt*, to explain both the Nature of the Second Perſon of the Trinity, and the Mode of his Eternal Generation. And I think it does both much better than any other, and indeed as far as conceivable by human underſtanding. So highly uſeful is this Doctrine of Idea's, when rightly underſtood, to unfold the profoundeſt Myſteries of the *Chriſtian Religion* as well as of *Philoſophy*: And ſo great reaſon had St. *Auſtin* to ſay, *Tanta vis in Ideis conſtituitur, ut niſi his intellectis, ſapiens eſſe nemo poſſit. There's ſo much moment in Idea's, that without the underſtanding of theſe, no Man can be Wiſe.*

Tom. 4. p. 548. Q. 46.

XXVI.

And I further conſider, that this is no leſs according to the Voice of Scripture than of Natural Reaſon. St. *John*

St. *John* ſpeaking of the ſecond Perſon of the Trinity, ſays, *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.* He ſays alſo that all things were made by him, or according to him δι' αὐτοῦ. And he further ſays that *he is the true light, that lightens every man that cometh into the world.* Now what can this ſignifie but this *Ideal World*, or the Eſſence of God as variouſly exhibitive and repreſentative of things? For obſerve, he calls him λόγος, which here ſignifies the ſame as the inward conception or Idea, he ſays that he was in the *Beginning*, and that he was *with God*, and that he *was God*, and that all things were made *by him*; Thus far it muſt be allow'd that the agreement is very exact. As for the laſt part of the character, How this can be ſaid to be the true Light which lightens every Man that comes into the World, this I ſhall explain when I come to conſider the *Nature of Man*, who as I ſhall ſhew, ſees and knows all

all that he ſees and knows in this *Ideal World*, which may therefore be ſaid to be his *Light*.

XXVII.

Again, this ſecond Perſon is ſaid to be the *Wiſdom of his Father*, to be the *Character of his Perſon*, both which expreſſions denote him to be the ſame with this Ideal World. And by him God is ſaid to have *made the Worlds*: that is according to the eternal Exemplars or Platforms in this Ideal World. To which I may add by way of overplus, that noble Deſcription of the Eternal and Subſtantial Wiſdom given us in the 7. Chap. of the Book of Wiſdom. ἄτμις γὰρ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεως, ἀπόῤῥοια τῆς τοῦ παντοκρατόρος δόξης, ἔκπτυσμα τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας, καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ. *The Breath* (or Vapour) *of the Power of God, and an Efflux* (or Emanation) *from the glory of the Almighty, a clear Mirrour* (or Looking-glaſs) *of his active Energory vertue, and the Image of his goodneſs.* And what can all this be but the Eſſence

Heb. 1.

Eſſence of God as Exhibitive, the Ideal World? Laſtly, I would have it conſidered how what our Saviour ſays of himſelf, *I am the Truth*, and what the Apoſtles ſays of him, that he is the *Wiſdom of his Father*, can be verifi'd any other way but by this Hypotheſis.

XXVIII.

I have the longer inſiſted on this to ſhew not only the *Truth* of this *Ideal World*, and that the Eſſences of things have *eternal* Exiſtence in it, but alſo how very *uſeful* this Notion is for the Eſtabliſhment of the *Divinity* of Chriſt, and for the explication of his *Eternal generation* from the Father, which is alſo a further confirmation that the Notion is true and Solid. So great aguard is true *Platoniſm* againſt *Socinianiſm*.

XXIX.

Hence alſo we may be inſtructed how to underſtand that common Axiom of the Schools, *that the Truth of every thing is its conformity to the Divine underſtanding*. This muſt by no means be underſtood

ſtood of the Mind of God as *Conceptive*, that is, as reflecting upon himſelf as Exhibitive, for the Truth of the Divine Intellect as *Conceptive*, depends upon its conformity with the truth of things, not the truth of things upon that. But it muſt be meant of the Mind of God as *Exhibitive*, that is, of this *Ideal World*, for upon this all Truth depends, and every thing, and every Propoſition is ſo far true as 'tis conformable with it. For indeed the Intellect of God, as *Exhibitive* is the *Cauſe* and *Meaſure* of *all Truth*.

XXX.

And, 'twas for want of the help of this Notion that that Keen Wit, *Diſcartes* blunder'd ſo horribly in ſtating the dependence of Propoſitions of Eternal Truth, upon the Intellect of God. He ſaw it 'twas neceſſary (as indeed it is) to make God the cauſe of Truth, and that truth muſt ſome way or other depend upon him. But then he makes it depend upon the Mind of God

God as *Conceptive*, and that things are ſo only becauſe God is pleas'd ſo to conceive them. And this he carries ſo high, as to ſay, that even in a Triangle, three Angles would not have been equal to two Right ones, had not God been pleaſed ſo to conceive and make it. Now I am for the dependence of truth upon the Divine Intellect as well as he, but not ſo as to make it *Arbitrary* and *Contingent*, and Conſequently not upon the Divine Intellect as *Conceptive*, but only as *Exhibitive*. That is, that things are therefore True in as much as they are conformable to thoſe *ſtanding* and *immutable Ideas*, which are in the mind of God as Exhibitive, and Repreſentative of all the whole Poſſibility of Being.

XXXI.

Now if after all, this Ideal way of things ſubſiſting from all Eternity in God, ſhould ſeem ſtrange (as I ſuppoſe it will to thoſe who are unexerciſed in theſe Contemplations) I ſhall only further ſay, Firſt, that

that it must be infinitely more strange that there should be Eternal Truths, that is, Eternal Relations and Habitudes of simple Essences, or things, without the Co-eternal existence of the things themselves so related. For what should support such Relations? The simple Essences therefore must exist eternally, if their Relations do? and where can that be but in the Mind of God?

XXXII.

Secondly, I say that this Ideal way of subsisting, ought not to seem such a Bugbear as some make it, since 'tis necessary not only for the salving of Propositions of Eternal Truth, before their Subjects exist in Nature, but even when they do. For even while things have a Natural subsistence, the Propositions concerning them are not, cannot be verifi'd according to their *Natural*, but according to their *Ideal* subsistencies. Thus we demonstrate several Propositions concerning a Right Line, a Circle, &c. when yet in

in the mean time 'tis moſt certain, that none of theſe are to be found in Nature, according to that exactneſs ſuppoſed in our Demonſtration. Such and ſuch Affections therefoe do not belong to them, as they are in *Nature*, and therefore they muſt belong to them as they are in the *Ideal World*, or not at all.

XXXIII.

And if this be true in Propoſitions, whoſe Subjects exiſt in Nature, much more is it in Eternal Propoſitions, whoſe ſimple Eſſences have not always a Natural exiſtence. Theſe can no otherwiſe ſtand, but by ſuppoſing the Co-eternal exiſtence of Simple Eſſences in the Ideal World.

XXXIV.

I ſhall add but this one Conſideration more upon this Head, that there is no greater ſign of the ſoundneſs of a Truth, than when its profeſt Adverſaries do unawares fall in with it. And this I take to be the caſe here. The Schoolmen who ſtand devoted to the Authority

ty of *Ariſtotle*, do notwithſtanding by a kind of *blind Parturiency*, light oftentimes upon ſuch Notions, which if thoroughly ſifted muſt needs come to the ſame with what we have hitherto contended for. For I would fain know what they can mean elſe by the celebrated *Glaſs* of the *Divinity*? What can this be but the *Ideal World* repreſenting all the Eſſences of things? And what elſe can they mean when they ſay (as they commonly do) of *Science*, that it is not of *Singulars*, as being flux Temporary, mutable and contingent, but of *Abſtract* and *Univerſal* Natures? What is this but in other words to confeſs the neceſſity of Eternal Eſſences or Ideas exiſting out of and before thoſe Singulars whoſe Eſſences they are, in order to the ſalving the *ſtability* of *Science*? Thus do theſe Men ſtumble upon Truth blindfold, but not diſcerning her through her veil, they let her go again.

XXXV.

Nay, even *Ariſtotle* himſelf after all his zealous oppoſition of *Plato's* Ideas has in the fourth of his Metaphyſics come about to him again, and croſs'd the very Road which he ſtudied ſo carefully to avoid. For diſcourſing againſt the *Sceptics* who allow'd no certainty of Science, he firſt ſhews the ground of their miſtake to conſiſt in this, that they thought *Singulars* and *Senſibles* exiſting without, to be the only Objects of Science. His words are, αἴτιον τ δόξης τέτοις, &c. *The Original of theſe Mens miſtake was this, becauſe Truth is to be lookt for in things, and they conceiv'd the only things to be Senſibles, in which it is certain there is much of the Indeterminate Nature. Wherefore they perceiving all the Nature of Senſibles to be moveable, or in perpetual flux and mutation, ſince nothing can poſſibly be verified or conſtantly affirm'd concerning that which is not the ſame, but changeable, concluded that there could be no Truth*

at all, nor certainly of Science. Thoſe things which are the only objects of it, never continuing the ſame.

XXXVI.

Thus having open'd the grounds of this Sceptical Doctrine, in oppoſition to it, he thus adds, ἀξιωσομεν ἀυτὲς ὑπολαμβάνειν, &c. *we would have theſe Men therefore to know, that there is another kind of Eſſence of things, beſides that of Senſibles, to which belongeh, neither motion, nor corruption, nor any generation at all.*

XXXVII.

Obſerve here, that *Ariſtotle* does not deny the *Conſequence* of the *Sceptic*'s Argument. No, he allows if the Eſſences of things are not ſteddy and immutable, that there can be no certainty of Science. But he denys his *minor Propoſition*, and tells him that he goes upon a wrong Hypotheſis, in ſuppoſing that there are no other Eſſences of things but Singulars and Senſibles, in oppoſition to which he ſays, that there are other Eſſences of things which

which are immovable, incorruptible, and in generable. And that 'tis upon theſe that all Science is founded. Now who would deſire a better Eſtabliſhment of *Platonic Ideas*, than what *Ariſtotle* himſelf has here given? Let any Intelligent Perſon judge whether this be not a plain giving up the cauſe. So hard is it for a Man not to contradict *himſelf*, when once he comes to contradict *Truth*.

XXXVIII.

It being now from the Premiſes ſufficiently concluded, that the Ideas or Simple Eſſences of things have an Eternal exiſtence in God, and the manner of this their exiſtence being ſufficiently explain'd, the next advance of my Contemplation is this, that ſince all the Simple Eſſences of things do exiſt in the mind of God, *there* muſt alſo be the Repoſitory of all their ſeveral Habitudes and Reſpects, theſe naturally ariſing from the other, by way of Natural Reſult. For as the Relations of Eſſences cannot exiſt

without the Eſſences themſelves, ſo neither can the Eſſences exiſt without being accompany'd with ſuch their Eſſential Relations. And as before we argued from the Poſition of the Habitudes to the Poſition of the Simple Eſſences, ſo now we may as well argue from the Poſition of the Simple Eſſences to the Poſition of their Habitudes.

XXXIX.

Thus for inſtance, as from this Eternal Habitude, *viz.* that a Circle of ſuch a determinate Circumference will have ſuch a determinate Diameter, I may conclude, that the Eſſence of ſuch a Circle does eternally exiſt, ſo again ſuppoſing ſuch a Circle to exiſt, 'tis as neceſſary it ſhould retain ſuch a *Diameter*. And ſo in all other inſtances, the Eſſence argues and infers the Habitude, as well as the Habitude does the Eſſence. For 'tis here as in all other Relations which immediately reſult upon the poſition of the *Subject* and *Term*.

XL.

XL.

This admitted, I now conſider that there is now nothing wanting to infer the Omniſcience of God. For ſince the ſimple Eſſences of things do all exiſt in God, and ſince theſe are ever accompany'd with all their Habitudes and Relations, and ſince theſe are nothing elſe but *Truth*, it follows that all Truth is in God. I ſay God comprehending within himſelf all the Ideas and Eſſences of things with all their poſſible references and Reſpects, comprehends *all Truth*, the whole *field* of Truth within himſelf, which is the ſame as to be *Omniſcient*, Knowledge being nothing elſe but a *Comprehenſion of Truth*, as was before defined.

XLI.

And thus we have not only *proved* the Omniſcience of God, but in a great meaſure repreſented the *manner* of it. Concerning this therefore I ſhall only further remarque that the manner of the Divine Knowledge is the moſt Noble and

Perfect, that can poſſibly be conceiv'd. For 'tis not by any derivative Phantaſms, or Secondary Images of things, but *per αὐτοπαρουσίαν τῦ πράγματος*, by the very immediate and eſſential Preſence of the things themſelves. He has all his Knowledge at the *firſt hand*, he ſees, nay he is *poſſeſt* of the very Eſſence of things, he is the very Source and Fountain of all Truth, nay he is *Truth it ſelf*. And beſides, his Knowledge is all ſimple and uncompounded, without Reaſoning and inferring, premiſing and concluding, for he has ever before him in one ſimple view the whole Field of Truth, and with one ſingle Act of *Intuition* glances through the whole Poſſibility of Being. For this *Word of God*, this λόγος, who is the Eſſential Wiſdom of his Father, *is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edg'd Sword, piercing even to the dividing aſſunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the joynts and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the Heart. Neither is there any Crea-*

Creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight. But all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do. Heb. 3. 12.

LXII.

Thus is this one ſingle ſolitary Being; God, qualifi'd for the government of the World upon the account of his *Knowledge*. He is ſo alſo in reſpect of his being *Preſent* to the World he is to grovern. For he is *Omnipreſent*, as well as *Omniſcient*: which is the next Attribute of God, which in this Contemplation I undertook to conſider.

XLIII.

The Omnipreſence of God has been more queſtion'd than any one of his Attributes, both among the *Antients*, and among the *Moderns*. *Ariſtotle* in his *Metaphyſics* ſays that the firſt Mover muſt neceſſarily be either in the *Centre*, or in the *Circle* or *Circumference*. That is, according to him, either in the middle of the Earth, or in the Extreme Heaven. And the latter has by moſt of the old Philoſophers been

assign'd for his Residence. In the *Church*, the more Antient *Jews* confin'd him to the Temple of *Jerusalem*. And of late years this Doctrine of the Partial and limited Presence of God has been renew'd by *Vorstius*, Professour of Divinity at *Leyden*, who asserts that God is only in Heaven as to his Essence, and elsewhere only in respect of his Wisdom, Power and Providence.

XLIV.

But that God is every where Essentially Present, both in every part of the World, and also in all *Extra mundan* Spaces, is most certain from the very Idea of God. 'Tis impossible that Being it self should be excluded from any part of Being. For every part of Being partakes of, and subsists in and by Being it self. And besides Being it self is *indeterminate* in being (as was proved in the second Contemplation) but now what is indeterminate in Being, is also indeterminate in existing, for existing follows Being

Being as the Act of it, and to exiſt indeterminately is the ſame as to be Omnipreſent. God therefore who is Being it ſelf, is alſo an Omnipreſent Being.

XLV.

Concerning the manner of this Omnipreſence of God I think I may ſafely determine that he is every where preſent, not only *Vertually* and *Efficaciouſly* by his Wiſdom and Power, but alſo *Subſtantially* and *Eſſentially*. For Power and Wiſdom is not any thing really different from the Eſſence of God. Neither can the Power of God be conceived to be any where, but his Eſſence muſt be there too. But after what ſpecial manner this Eſſence of God is Omnipreſent, whether by way of an Infinite Amplitude and Extenſion, as ſome think, or elſe by way of a Point, ſo as to be whole in the whole, and whole in every part of the World, as others will have it, I neither know, nor ſhall offer to determine. *Such Knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot*

not attain unto it. 'Tis ſufficient to know, that God is ſo every way Immenſe and Omnipreſent, as not to be *included in* any place, nor to be *excluded from* any. For the reſt, we muſt ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*,

Pſal. 145. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praiſed: and his greatneſs is unſearchable.*

The uſe of this to Devotion.

THE Conſideration of the Divine *Omniſcience* and *Omnipreſence*, is of excellent uſe to all the purpoſes of a Chriſtian life, as well as to the Intereſt of Devoti-

Gen. 17. on in particular. *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect*, ſays God to *Abraham*. Implying that the beſt Method of Perfection, was to live as in the ſight and preſence of God. And ſo the

Pſal. 16. *Pſalmiſt, I have ſet God always before me, therefore I ſhall not fall.* Implying, that if any thing would keep him from falling this would. For can there be any greater reſtraint

ſtraint upon our actions, any ſtronger preſervative againſt ſin, than duly to conſider the *Preſence* and *Inſpection* of God? *In virtutis oculis vivendum*; ſo ſaid the *Ancients*, We muſt live as in the Eyes of *Vertue*. They thought it an excellent expedient againſt Vice to have the *Idea of Vertue* always before one. And ſo no doubt it is. Nay, we ſee *leſs* will do, and that the Morals of Men are very much ſecured by living in the *Eye* of the *World*. Nay, *Seneca* goes lower yet, and tells us, That *Magna pars peccatorum tolleretur, ſi peccaturis teſtis aſſiſteret. A great deal of our wickedneſs would be prevented, if as Men were about to ſin, one ſingle witneſs were to ſtand by.* But, alas, what are ſuch expedients as theſe to the *Omniſcience* and *Omnipreſence* of God? No conſideration certainly is comparable to this. Will a Man commit Murther in the open Court, before the Face of his Judge? Nay, ſhall the preſence of a *Child* divert thee from ſinning? A *Child* that knows not the difference

Epiſt. 11.

ence between good and evil, that wants underſtanding to cenſure and condemn what he ſees, and has neither Authority nor Power to puniſh thee. Shall ſuch a one deter thee from ſin, and daſh in pieces the *frame* of thy ill deſigns, and dareſt thou ſin before thy God? Dareſt thou do works of Darkneſs in the preſence of him who is *pure Light*, and in whom there is no Darkneſs at all? Dareſt thou ruſh on when the Angel of God's Preſence ſtands in the way with a drawn Sword? The *Pſalmiſt* ſays, Pſal. 114. *Tremble thou earth at the preſence of God*, and dareſt thou ſin in his Preſence? No, thou wouldſt not dare, if thou didſt well conſider it. 'Tis a conſideration, this, That if well heeded, and attended to, would give a *Law* to our privacies and retirements, compoſe the *inmoſt receſſes* of our Minds, and not ſuffer a Thought or Paſſion to rebel. We ſhould then *ſtand in awe and not ſin*, and be as compoſed in our Cloſets as in a Theatre, or a Religious Aſſembly.

ſembly. For, indeed, to him that conſiders God as every where preſent, and a ſtrict obſerver of him and his actions, every place is a *Temple*, and accordingly he will put off his Shooes from his Feet, cleanſe and purifie his affections, becauſe the place whereon he ſtands is *Holy Ground.*

Thus advantagious is the influence of theſe two Conſiderations to good life in general; as for their ſpecial uſefulneſs to Devotion, we may hence collect, *Firſt*, That we ought to have our Minds always in a Divine Frame and Temper, and always compoſed with the greateſt Awefulneſs and Reverence, Seriouſneſs, Gravity and *Silence* of Spirit, as being ever in the Preſence, and under the direct Inſpection of the Great God.

Secondly, That we ought to pray to him with all Humility and Reverence, both of Soul and Body, and with an humble confidence of being heard by him where-ever we are, or however we deliver our ſelves

ſelves, whether by *Vocal* or *Mental* Prayer.

Thirdly, That we ought in our Prayers to uſe great fixedneſs and attention of Mind, without any wandrings, or impertinent mixtures of foreign thoughts, which are never more ready to croud into our Minds, than when we are at our Devotions, and yet are never ſo abſurd as then.

Fourthly, That we ever commend our Cauſe to God, who ſees and knows all things, and be well ſatisfi'd with his Judgment and Approbation, when ever our Innocence is falſly charged by the World.

And, *Laſtly*, That we ought never to repine, or be diſcontented at the Affairs of the World, but rather truſt and rely upon the All-wiſe conduct of him who ſees from end to end, knows how to bring Light out of Darkneſs, and diſpoſes all things ſweetly.

The Aſpiration.

O Lord, thou haſt ſearched me out, and known me, thou knoweſt my down-ſitting, and mine up-riſing, thou underſtandeſt my thoughts long before. Thou art about my Path, and about my Bed, and ſpieſt out all my ways. For, lo, there is not a word in my Tongue, but thou, O Lord, knoweſt it altogether. Thou haſt faſhion'd me behind and before, and laid thine Hand upon me. Whither ſhall I go then from thy Spirit? Or whither ſhall I go then from thy Preſence? If I climb up into Heaven, thou art there, If I go down to Hell, thou art there alſo. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea, even there alſo ſhall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand ſhall hold me. If I ſay, peradventure the Darkneſs ſhall cover me, then ſhall my Night be turn'd to Day. Yea, the Darkneſs is no Darkneſs with thee, but the Night is as clear as the Day; the Darkneſs and Light to thee are both alike.

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Do

Do thou then, O my God, ſo imprint the Senſe of this thy Omniſcience and Omnipreſence upon every Faculty and Power of my Soul, that I may ever *think*, *ſpeak*, and *act* as in the Light of thy All-ſeeing Eye, and as immediately ſurrounded, and intimately poſſeſſed with the Glory of thy Preſence. O fill me with the profoundeſt Awe and Reverence, compoſe my levities, confirm my doubtfulneſs, and fix my wandrings, and make me ever ſatisfied with the Methods of thy Wiſe Providence.

And when by the Meditation of this thy Knowledge and Preſence, I ſhall learn to demean my ſelf in any meaſure as I ought: grant that upon the ſame conſideration, I may content my ſelf with thy Divine Approbation and Allowance, whatever I am thought of in Man's Judgment. *Finally*, O my God, Grant I may ſo *ſet* thee before me *here*, that I may not be afraid to *appear* before thee *hereafter*. *Amen*.

Con-

Contemplation VI.

Of the Omnipotence of God.

I.

THE next Attribute, whereby this One God becomes qualifi'd for the Government of the Univerſe, is his *Omnipotence*. Whereby may be underſtood, and commonly is, a Power of doing whatſoever is *poſſible* to be done. But in this there is ſome difficulty, from which we muſt diſengage our Notion.

II.

For, whereas every thing that is poſſible, is made the Object of the Divine Power, a nice enquirer may here demand, What do you mean by *Poſſible?* For Poſſible has its denomination from *Power*, and therefore muſt be meaſured either in relation to *created* Power, or in relation to *increated* Power. If in rela-

tion to the first, then for God to be able to do all that is possible, will amount to no more, Than that he can do whatever a *Creature* can do. But, if in relation to the second, then for God to be able to do all that is possible, will be the same as to say, That he can do whatever he *can* do. Which would be a very notable discovery. And, besides, according to this measure, a Man might truly say, that God were Omnipotent; tho' at the same time he should deny that he could Create any thing besides the *present* World: because he could then do all that is possible, there being nothing then but this World so denominated from the Divine Power, as *Suarez* rightly infers.

Disp. 30. *Sect.* 17.

III.

To satisfie therefore this difficulty, we must find out another sense of the word *Possible*, than what is taken from denomination to any *Power*. I consider, therefore, that a thing may be said to be possible *Absolutely* and *Negatively*, from the habitude

bitude of the *ſimple Idea's themſelves*, as well as from relation to any *Power* which may ſo denominate it. My meaning is, That there are ſome Idea's whoſe habitude is ſuch to one another, that they may admit of compoſition: there are others, again, whoſe habitude is ſuch that they cannot admit of compoſition, but ſtand neceſſarily divided. The firſt of theſe I call Poſſible, the ſecond I call Impoſſible. Poſſible, therefore in this ſenſe, is the ſame as that which involves no repugnance. And therefore, to avoid all Ambiguity, ſetting aſide the Word *Poſſible*, I ſhall chuſe rather to expreſs the Omnipotence of God by calling it a Power of doing whatever involves no repugnancy or contradiction.

IV.

Now, that God is thus Omnipotent (not to ſeek out after other Arguments) I thus demonſtrate from the Idea of God. Being it ſelf is the proper, full and adequate cauſe of Being, for whatever is, ſo

far as it is, it partakes of Being it ſelf, as was before proved. Now if Being it ſelf be the proper, full and adequate cauſe of Being, then its effect muſt extend to all thoſe things which are not repugnant to the Nature and *Reaſon of Being*. For if it did extend only to ſome certain Ones, then Being it ſelf would not be the proper, full, and adequate cauſe of *Being*, as is ſuppoſed, but only of this or that *particular* Being. And if it extends to all things that are not repugnant to the *Reaſon of Being*, then it muſt extend to all but *not being*: For not being only is regugnant to the Reaſon of Being. God, therefore, who is Being it ſelf, can do all, that does not involve in it the Reaſon of not being; but theſe are only contradictions: God therefore can do whatever does not imply a contradiction, and is therefore Omnipotent. Which was the thing to be proved.

The

The Uſe of this to Devotion.

FRom the *Omnipotence* of God, we may take occaſion to make theſe Concluſions. *Firſt*, That we ought to revere and fear him above all the things in the World, and endeavour by the utmoſt ſervices of a well-order'd life to make him our *Friend*, conſidering what a fearful thing it is to fall into the Hands of an *Omnipotent Enemy*. *I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear*, ſays our Saviour, *fear him, which after he has killed, has power to caſt into hell, yea I ſay unto you, Fear him.* Luke 12. 5.

Secondly, That when once we have made God our Friend, and engaged him on our ſide, we then fear no *Created* Power, whether Human or Diabolical. For if an Omnipotent God be with us, what need we care who is againſt us. We ought rather to ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, *tho' I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaff comfort me.* Pſal. 23. 4.

Laſtly, We ought upon Conſideration of this great Attribute of God, to repoſe a firm truſt and confidence in all his Promiſes, tho' never ſo contrary to the Ordinary *Laws of Nature*, and to the common Meaſures of *Human Probability*. Since our concern is with him, who is the God of Nature, and with whom (as the Angel tells us) nothing *ſhall be* impoſſible.

Luke 1. 37.

The Aſpiration.

WIth thee, O my God, is *Power and Strength*, and with thee ought to be *Dominion and Fear*. *My fleſh trembles for fear of thee: and I am afraid of thy Judgments.* Thou art Terrible, O my God, as well as Lovely, but thou art alſo Lovely in thy very Terrour. *Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me*; they have overcome me with their Dread, as well as with their Beauty; For, as *thou art Beautiful, O my Love, as* Tirzah, *Comely, as* Jeruſalem; ſo art thou

Cant. 6. 5.

thou alſo *Terrible, as an Army with Banners.*

O my Omnipotent Love, with what *ſafety*, as well as *delight*, do I ſit under thy Shadow! Thou haſt brought me into thy Banquetting-Houſe, and thy Banner over me, is *Power* as well as *Love.* Thy Love is ſtronger than Death; what need I fear, thy left Hand is under my Head, and thy right Hand does imbrace me; And why then ſhould any dread approach me? *The Lord is my light and my ſalvation, whom then ſhall I fear? He is the ſtrength of my life, of whom then ſhould I be afraid.*

O, my God, why is not my *Faith* like thy *Power?* Thou canſt *do* all things; And why is my *Faith* limited? Let me imitate thee, O my God, in this thy Infinity: and grant me ſuch a Victorious, ſuch an *Omnipotent* Faith, that as to thee nothing is too hard to do, ſo to me nothing may be too hard to believe. *Amen.*

Contemplation VII.

Of the Divine Juſtice and Veracity.

I.

FRom the Omnipotence of God, I proceed to the Conſideration of his *Juſtice*, this being as neceſſary a qualification in the Governour of the whole World as the other. Now, by Juſtice in this place, I underſtand particular, not Univerſal Juſtice. And of particular Juſtice, not that which is Commutative (for this has no place in God; for, as the Apoſtle ſays, *Who has firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed to him again?*) but that which is *Diſtributive*, and conſiſts in a conſtant will of diſpenſing to every Perſon according to his deſerts.

Rom. 11. 35.

II. This

II.

This *Juſtice* of God is the ſame in the *moral* World, as *Order* and *Proportion* is in the *Natural*. 'Tis giving to every thing its due place and ſtation, and diſpoſing it according to its Nature and Condition. For as the Beauty of the *Natural* World ariſes from *Proportion*, ſo does the Beauty of the *Moral* World ariſe alſo from due *Order* and *Proportion*; and as God has ſtrictly obſerv'd this Rule in the *making* of the World, having made all things in Number, Weight and Meaſure, ſo we may be ſure he proceeds by the ſame Standard in the *Government* and conduct of it, though the exactneſs of this latter is not ſo obvious to our obſervation, as that of the former, nor are we ſo well able to judge of the *Moral*, as of the *Natural Geometry* of God.

III.

Now that God is thus Juſt, always acting according to true *Order and Proportion*, may ſufficiently be made out from this ſingle Conſideration.

ſideration. All Order and Proportion (as every one I ſuppoſe will readily grant) is, in it ſelf conſider'd, lovely and deſirable. If ſo, then it cannot be nill'd or refuſed for it ſelf, or as ſuch. If ſo, then whenever it is refuſed, it muſt be refuſed for the ſake of ſome other greater good. If ſo, then this other greater good muſt be, either the private intereſt of the Refuſer, or ſome other Private Intereſt, or the Publick Intereſt. But neihter of theſe can here find any admiſſion. It cannot be for the Private Intereſt of the Refuſer, who is here ſuppoſed to be a Being abſolutely Perfect; and conſequently not capable of propoſing to himſelf any ſelf-end. And cannot be for the Publick Intereſt, for the greateſt Intereſt of the Publick conſiſts *in Order* and *Proportion.* Neither can this Order be violated for the Intereſt of any other Private Perſon, becauſe that is not a greater, but on the contrary, an infinitely leſs good, Order and Proportion being the good of the Publick,

Publick, which is always greater than any Private whatſoever. Since therefore Order and Proportion cannot be violated by God for any of theſe ends, nor for its own ſake, it being *as ſuch* lovely and deſirable, as was ſuppoſed, it follows that Order and Proportion cannot poſſibly be violated by God at all, and conſequently 'tis neceſſary that God ſhould always effectually Will *Order* and *Proportion*, which is the ſame as to be *Juſt*.

IV.

By this Juſtice, or Will of following Order and Proportion, God ſtands ingaged not to puniſh an Innocent Creature, or to afflict him with any evil greater than that good which he has conferr'd upon him: Within that compaſs indeed he may, for that is only to deduct from that Happineſs, every degree of which was a free favour. But he cannot impoſe the leaſt grain or ſcruple of evil upon him beyond the good conferr'd, without ſome demerit of the Creature. Much leſs

leſs will this Juſtice of God permit that he ſhould predetermin an Innocent Creature, without reſpect to any Crime, meerly for his own will and pleaſure, to everlaſting miſery. He that can make this conſiſtent with God's Juſtice, or any Juſtice in the World, had need be a very good *Reconciler*.

V.

But now whether God's Juſtice obliges him *to puniſh* the *Sinner*, as well as *not to puniſh the Innocent*, is a thing that will admit of more queſtion. This has been argued with great Contention between ſome Schools, and is too diſputable to be poſitively determined. For my part I am more inclined to think that the Nature of God obliges him to puniſh ſin ſome where or other, and that *vindicative Juſtice* is *Eſſential* to him.

VI.

That it is ſo far Eſſential to him that he cannot but puniſh an *impenitent* Sinner, few I believe will queſtion. For nothing in the World can

can be imagined more againſt Order and Proportion than that a Sinner ſhould be *pardon'd* without *Repentance*. But further, 'tis highly *probable* that ſin could not have been, pardon'd even *with* Repentance, had there not alſo been *Satisfaction* made to God for it. 'Tis plain *de facto*, that God *would not* remit ſin without ſatisfaction, and that too the higheſt imaginable: Which makes it very probable that he *could* not. For is it reaſonable to think that God would deliver up his only and beloved Son to that *bitter diſpenſation*, if, with the ſafety of his Juſtice, he could have pardon'd us, meerly for our *Repentance*, without ſuch a coſtly *ſacrifice*? And that he could not, does not that Prayer of our Saviour argue, which he uſed in his Agony? *Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me*: Which is as much as if he had ſaid, *Father if the ſin of Man may be remitted any other way than by way of ſuffering, I deſire I may not ſuffer.* This I think is the

Obvi-

Obvious ſenſe of the Words. But this Prayer of his, was not granted by the removal of the Cup, and may I not thence conclude that 'twas impoſſible it ſhould be removed?

VII.

And I further conſider that God neceſſarily hates ſin with an infinite hatred, as a thing that is diametrically oppoſite to his own Eſſential ſanctity, and to thoſe great Ends which he cannot but propoſe in the regulation of the univerſe. But how he ſhould thus hate it, and yet not ſhew this his hatred by puniſhing it, is not eaſie to conceive. And beſides, it ſeems agreeable to the Laws of Order and Proportion, that ſo great a *Diſ-harmony* as *Sin*, ſhould never go *wholly* unpuniſh'd, but that the Publick happineſs, of which Sin is a *violation*, ſhould be both *repair'd*, and *ſecured* by the exaction of *ſome* ſatisfaction.

VIII.

If it be ſaid, that every one may remit as much as he pleaſe from his own

own Right, and that then much more may God. I anſwer, that Right, is either Right of *Dominion*, or Right of *Office*. From Right of Dominion, when alone, no doubt any perſon may remit what he pleaſes, but not from Right of Office, or from Right of Dominion, when joyn'd with Right of Office. Now there is great reaſon to believe that the exacting of Puniſhment for ſin, is not in God a Right of Dominion only, but alſo a Right of Office; that is, that God does not puniſh only as *ſupreme Lord*, but as a *Judge*; and as a *Judge*, 'tis congruous to ſuppoſe that he may be obliged to puniſh. Obliged, not by any Law or Power ſuperiour to himſelf, but by the Eſſential Rectitude of his own Nature and Will: Which by obliging him to regard the Public Order and Intereſt, may by conſequence oblige him to animadvert upon thoſe who tranſgreſs againſt it.

IX.

IX.

And thus far of the Juſtice of God, whereby he deals uprightly and equally with all his Creatures, and renders to every one his own, according to their Works, good or bad, without any Partiality or Reſpect of Perſons. The next thing I conſider in God is his *veracity*, whereby all his words are conformable to his Mind and Intention, and all his performances conformable to his words: Whereby he moſt aſſuredly makes good all his Covenants, Promiſes and Threatnings, and cannot poſſibly deceive his Creatures any more than he himſelf can be deceived.

X.

That there is this veracity in God we may be aſſured from the *All-ſufficiency* and *Perfection* of his Being. For all Fraud and Deceit is grounded upon *Inigence* and *Infirmity*. No Man deceives meerly for *deceivings ſake*, but to ſerve a turn, to relieve a Neceſſity. And ſuch a Neceſſity too as cannot be reliev'd

reliev'd any other way. For Fraud is not only a Remedy, but the *laſt* Remedy; men never betake themſelves to *tricks*, but when they can't compaſs their Ends by *Plain-dealing*. But now none of theſe things can be incident to God, who being above all *Indigence* and *Infirmity*, muſt of conſequence be as much above all *Falſhood* and *Deceit*.

The Uſe of this to Devotion.

COnſidering then that God is thus ſtrictly *Juſt*, *True* and *Faithful*, 'tis rational hence to conclude, firſt, how much it concerns us to *Fear* him, and to beware how we render our ſelves *Obnoxious* to this his Juſtice.

Secondly, That we ought always to reſt intirely ſatisfy'd in the Divine Diſpenſations, knowing that 'tis impoſſible but that this Judge of the whole Earth ſhould do *Right*.

And laſtly, That we ought readily and firmly to believe him in all the Manifeſtations of his Mind and

Will, and particularly that we ought to repoſe a ſtrong Confidence in his Covenants and Promiſes, being well aſſured that he is Faithful who has promiſed.

The Aſpiration.

MY *God*, *My Judge*, who art Righteous in all thy ways, and Holy in all thy works, I delight to think of thee, tho' I am too guilty to contemplate thee, in this thy Attribute, without Fear and Trembling. For there is *Judgment* as well as *Mercy* with thee that thou ſhouldſt be Fear'd. *O enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be Juſtify'd.*

My God, how ſtrangely Impious are they who dare ſay or think that the way of the Lord is not equal! My God, I am none of thoſe, nor will I ever be of that profane number. I will ever acquieſce in the Equity of thy Diſpenſations, whether I am able to comprehend it or no. For I know tho' Clouds and Darkneſs may

may ſometimes be round about thee, yet Righteouſneſs and Judgement are always the Habitation of thy Seat.

I readily and firmly aſſent, O my God, to all the Declarations thou haſt made of thy Mind and Will. I believe all thy Predictions, all thy Promiſes, and all thy Threatnings, that they ſhall be *fulfill'd* all *in their Seaſon.* I know that nothing but Truth can proceed from thee who art Truth it ſelf: I know that thou, O God, can'ſt not deceive us, O grant that we may not deceive our ſelves. *Amen.*

Contemplation VIII.

Of the Divine Goodneſs and Philanthropy.

I.

I ſhall now cloſe up theſe my Conſiderations of God, with a *Meditation* upon the *Divine Goodneſs*, by which I underſtand a Propenſion of doing good to his Creatures by the Communication of his own good or happineſs. But here upon my firſt entrance, I find my ſelf plunged beyond my Depth. It is an immenſe Ocean which no Line can fathom, and where the Sight loſes it ſelf in a long boundleſs Proſpect. This is that Attribute which in a peculiar manner adorns and accompliſhes the Divine Nature, and renders it Amiable and Lovely, as well as Venerable and Adorable. This is the high-

eſt

eſt Repaſt of Angels, and the peculiar entertainment of Contemplative Souls, many of which who had no other guide to follow but the Clue of their own Reaſonings, have long ſince obſerved that Goodneſs is the Principal; and, as I may ſay, the *Divineſt* Attribute of the Deity.

II.

This the *Gentile* Theology intended by making Love the moſt ancient of all the Gods. And accordingly we find in the Platonic Trinity (which is τὸ ἀγαθὸν, νοῦς and ψυχὴ) that the firſt place is aſſign'd to the τό ἀγαθὸν which they conceive after the manner of an immenſe and moſt pure Light, continually diffuſing and Communicating its invigorative Beams. And this was that which the fine Platoniſt *Boethius* alluded to, in that celebrated and graphical deſcription of God, when he call'd him *Fons Boni Lucidus*, the *Lucid Fountain of Good.* And there is an ancient *Cabaliſtical Table* ſuppoſed to be borrowed from the *Pythagoreans*, which repreſents in a

visible Scheme the Order of the Divine Perfection, wherein 'tis observable that Goodness is seated in the Supreme Circle, which they call *Chether* or the *Crown*, thereby intimating that goodness presides over, and gives Laws and Measures to all the other Attributes of God.

III.

And indeed it does so: For thus God's Power serves to execute the Dictates of his Wisdom, and his Wisdom is employ'd in finding out Objects, Methods and Occasions, for the exercise of his Goodness. Nay, even Justice it self, which at first seems to thwart and reprimand the inclinations of Goodness, will notwithstanding be found upon nearer inspection, sweetly to conspire and accord with it, nay (what seems a greater Paradox) to be one of the Instances and Exemplifications of it. For God never punishes but when Order, that is, the good of the Universe requires it, and consequently never but when upon the whole 'tis best to do so. So that God's goodness

neſs will ſtill be the *Chether*, the *Crown* of all his Perfections.

IV.

Plato calls God ἰδέα τῦ ἀγαθῦ, *the Idea or Eſſence of Goodneſs.* A very high expreſſion. But ſays not the Scripture alſo the ſame? For when it defines God, it does not ſay he is Wiſdom or Power, but that he is *Love.* Not *Loving*, but *Love* it ſelf. And our Saviour in Anſwer to him that call'd him good Maſter, tells us, There is none good but *One*, that is *God.* As if this Divineſt Attribute were *that Honour*, of which God is ſaid by the Prophet to be ſo Jealous, that he will not give it to another: not to any of the Sons of Men, no not to *the* Son of Man. Iſa. 42. 8.

V.

And indeed God may well be Jealous of this his *Honour*, ſince goodneſs is that Attribute which does not only render the Deity moſt lovely to us, but is alſo moſt peculiarly beloved by Himſelf. 'Tis his Favourite and darling Excellence, that which he ſeems moſt of all to

delight in, and to value as the very Flower and Beauty of all his Excellence. And therefore when *Moſes* deſired to have a ſight of his Glory, his Anſwer to him was, *I will make my goodneſs paſs before thee.*

VI.

And how much God is in Love with this his Attribute, we may conclude from the great uſe and exerciſe of it. God has exerciſed his goodneſs more than all the reſt of his Attributes, ſo that the Stream riſes almoſt as high as the Fountain, and the Inſtances and Exemplifications of it are almoſt as infinite as it ſelf. The *Material* Fabrick of the World is the Emanation of the Divine goodneſs, and who can tell how large that is, or where the utmoſt boundaries of it are fix'd? Then as for the *Intellectual* part of the Creation, how fruitful has the Divine goodneſs been, and what a Numerous Progeny has it brought forth! Who can number the Lords Hoſt? *Thouſand thouſands miniſter unto him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtand before*

Dan. 7. 10.

before him. All theſe drink of the ſame inexhauſtible *Well of Life*, of this *Lucid Fountain of good*; and with perpetual Anthems of Praiſe celebrate the bounty of their Maker.

VII.

But altho thoſe higher Orders of Spirits, who are ſeated near the Spring-head of Bliſs, enjoy a greater ſhare of the Divine Goodneſs, and being as it were in a *direct Poſition* to that All-glorious Sun, muſt needs drink in more plentiful and more vigorous Effuſions of his Light, yet Man, the Younger Brother, ſeems in ſome reſpects to be the Darling of Heaven, and to be Privileg'd with ſome peculiar Tokens of Favour. I ſhall chuſe to inſtance in two. One is, That Man is admitted to the *Grace* of *Repentance*, and has the advantage of *Second thoughts*, whereas *God ſpared not the Angels that ſinn'd.* Pet. 2. 4. The other is, That Man had the Honour to be Hypoſtatically United with the λόγ☉ the Second Perſon of the B. Trinity. So that what was figuratively ſpoken by God in the

Caſe

Case of *Adam*, is here in some measure really verify'd, *Behold Man is*
Heb. 2. 16. *become as one of us*; whereas *he refused to take upon him the Nature of Angels.*

VIII.

These indeed are the two greater Lights that shine most conspicuously in the Firmament, and such as when alone consider'd, would wind up a contemplative Spirit to that Extatic Admi-
Psal. 8. ration of the Psalmist, *Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him!* But there are also a multitude of lesser Stars, many of which we do not observe, tho we feel and thrive under their Influence; and those which we do we cannot number. God's Favours are too quick for our Accounts, and the Heavenly Manna falls so thick about our Tents, that we want opportunity to gather it up.

IX.

But that I may Sail by some Compass in so wide and boundless an Ocean, I consider that the Effects

of

of God's goodneſs to Man may be diſtributed into theſe two Kinds in general, *Giving* and *Forgiving*. Thoſe of giving again are of two ſorts: Either ſuch as are to be conferr'd upon us after our Work is done, by which I underſtand the Rewards of Heaven, or ſuch as are given us by way of Earneſt, or Anticipation.

X.

I begin with the laſt of theſe, where the firſt thing that offers it ſelf to our conſideration is the *Collation of our Being*; which I do not underſtand as it is generally taken in the Schools, namely, For naked and abſtract Exiſtence, For thus to *Be* Abſolutely has no manner of intrinſic good in it, but is only a Foundation or Capacity of a good or evil State Indifferently. And this methinks is ſo very plain, that I ſhould much wonder how ſo many Metaphyſical Heads could eſpouſe the contrary, were it not found to be a convenient Device for the Maintenance of that abſurd Paradox, *that 'tis better to Be, tho in Extreme Miſery, than not to be*;

which

which Propoſition was alſo intended for the ſupport of another, every whit as abſurd, *viz.* That God may conſiſtently with his Goodneſs and Juſtice, inflict eternal Miſery upon an Innocent Creature. For ſince he may (as all grant) Annihilate an Innocent Creature, 'twill follow that he may with leſs appearance of Injuſtice, inflict on him eternal Miſery, Annihilation (according to theſe mens Metaphyſics) being the greater evil of the two. And that for this notable Reaſon, becauſe he that *is*, tho never ſo miſerable, enjoys ſome good, *viz.* that of Exiſtence, whereas he that is not, has none at all.

XI.

But now, beſides that the good of Simple being, may be outweigh'd by Super-induced evils, and that then to *Be* all conſider'd, would not be good but evil, as I could eaſily ſhew were it my preſent concern further to ingage in that Controverſie; I ſay, beſides this, I do not allow the Truth of the firſt Aſſertion, that

that to be has any intrinſic good in it. And therefore when I begin the Catalogue of the Divine Favours, with the Collation of our Being, I do not underſtand by the Phraſe meerly our being brought into Act indefinitely (exiſtence as ſuch including neither good nor evil in it) but our being made ſuch certain Eſſences or Natures, conſiſting of ſuch Powers and Faculties as are requiſite to conſtitute ſuch an Order of Beings as according to ſuch a Mode of Imitability or Idea, is repreſented in the Divine Underſtanding, and which we diſtinguiſh by the Name of Mankind.

XII.

Now the Nature of Man involves much good and perfection in it, and conſequently for God to give it Exiſtence is an Act of *Goodneſs* as well as of *Power*. For tho there be (as I ſuppoſe) little or no deference to be paid to that popular Argument, which would derive an Obligation of gratitude upon Children toward their Parents, from their receiving their

their Being from them, becauſe there is no kindneſs here deſign'd to thoſe Perſons who in the *Event* (perhaps) are *profited*, but before were not ſo much as *known*; yet our caſe is quite otherwiſe, as to our receiving our Being from the Father of Spirits. For he both knew whom he was to oblige, when he gave us Being, and *intended* it as a kindneſs to *us*, having no Intereſt of his own to promote by it. Which are the two Qualifications required by *Seneca*, in his Book *De Beneficiis*, to make up the Nature of ſuch a Benefit as ſhall lay an Obligation upon the Receiver.

XIII.

Now both theſe Requiſites being eminently found in God, it follows that his Kindneſs in giving us Being, receives its Eſtimate from the value and excellency of the thing beſtow'd, which cannot appear little if we conſider, that ſuch was the Dignity and Excellency of Humane Nature, that it occaſion'd *deliberation* in Heaven, and was thought worthy of the *Council* of the *Trinity*. If we conſider, that Man is the moſt Noble

Noble part of all the visible Creation, the Abstract and Compendium of the Universe. That he is a Creature form'd after the Image of the Great God, endow'd with an excellent and immortal Spirit, and resembling his Maker, as in other respects, so in some measure in this, that he can and must needs be happy both in the *direct* Operations of his Nature, and in the *reflexive* acts of Contemplation upon the dignity of his Essence. To give therefore Being to such an accomplish'd Creature as this, is *ipso facto*, without Consideration of any further design, a very signal act of Love and Beneficence.

XIV.

Another very signal instance of the Divine Goodness to Man is our *Preservation*, whether we consider it in the more Metaphysical way of the Schools, as that uninterrupted Influx, which they call Continued Creation, whereon we depend as Essentially as the Image in the Glass does upon the Object; or whether we

we consider it after the more popular acceptation, as it denotes the Conduct and Superintendency of God's Providence, whereby he so disposes of the Events and Issues of things as either to keep off from us what would incommode our welfare, or to work out a more important good from those evils which he suffers to befal us.

XV.

And here it would be matter of wonderful curiosity, and pleasing astonishment, could we but discern from end to end those manifold turns and fetches, those Stratagems and Intrigues, that *Plot* of Providence which is engaged for our preservation through the various Occurrencies of Life. Could we but see what a Labyrinth, what a Maze we tread, and what reason there is for every turning, were but our Eyes open'd (as the Young mans were at the Prayer of *Elisha*) to see the Bright Host of Auxiliary Spirits that incamp about us, to see with what care and concern the good Angels contest on

2 King. 6. 17.

our

our behalf againſt the Powers of Darkneſs, as the Guardian Angel of the Jews did againſt the Prince of *Perſia*, and how many dangers both Goſtly and Bodily we eſcape through their Protection, could we I ſay ſee all this----But we may be content to *want* the *curioſity*, ſo long as we *enjoy* the *Benefit*, and reſt ſatisfi'd with what the Pſalmiſt aſſures us of in general, that *the Angel of the Lord tarrieth about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* Dan. 10. Pſal. 34.

XVI.

Another conſiderable inſtance of the Divine Goodneſs to Man, is ſeen in the *Proviſion* made by Providence for the neceſſaries and Conveniences of Life, ſuch as Food and Raiment, and the like. This was firſt exemplifi'd in the *Order* of the *Creation*, wherein 'tis to be obſerved that the Creation of Man was reſerved for the work of the *Sixth day*, till the World was both *Created* and *Furniſh'd* for his reception; till the Heavenly bodys were prepared to guide him by their *Light*, and

the Earth to feed him with her *Fruits*, and then God brings in Man into the World, like a Noble gueſt to a Table richly ſpread and ſet out with Delicacys.

XVII.

I dare not heighten this conſideration ſo far as ſome do, who affirm all things to have been made meerly for the uſe of Man. For although (as 'tis well noted by the *French* Philoſopher) upon a moral account, it be of good uſe to ſay that God made all things for our ſakes, it being a conſideration that would ſerve to excite in us a greater Love and Gratitude towards him, and although in ſome corrected Senſe it be true, in as much as we may make uſe of all things to ſome good purpoſe or other, either as *Objects* to employ our *Philoſophy* upon, or as *Occaſions* to *Magnifie* the goodneſs and Power of our Creator, yet to ſay that all things were ſo preciſely made for us as to exclude all other purpoſes, beſides that 'tis too boldly to determin concerning the

Princip. Phil. p. 50.

Ends

Ends of God, and to indulge a fond opinion of our ſelves, 'tis alſo plainly abſurd and unphiloſophical, there being queſtionleſs many things in the World ſo far from affording any real uſe to Man, that they never have been or ſhall be ſo much as ſeen or underſtood by him.

XVIII.

However thus far we may venture to determin, and more we need not require, that God had a ſpecial regard to Man in the Creation of the World, whom he has conſtituted Lord of the inferiour part of it, that (as the Pſalmiſt ſays) *he cover'd the Heavens with Clouds, and prepared Rain for the Earth, and made the Graſs to grow upon the Mountains, and Herbs for the uſe of Man.* Pſal. 147.

XIX.

But beſides this *general* and *Primary* deſignation of things for the uſe of Man, there is a more *Particular* and *Secondary* work of Providence to be obſerv'd in the ſo ma-

naging and Ordering of Affairs, that every Man may have a tolerable Portion of the good things of this Life. And this is effected not by leaving all things in *Common*, or giving every Man a right to every thing, for this would be of pernicious consequence, as tending both to the perpetual *disturbance* of the *Public Peace*, and to the *utter neglect* and *Disimprovement* of *Nature*; but by the limits and inclosures of *Property*, whereby care is taken that every Man shall either have something of his own, or be maintain'd by the Provisions of those that have. So that some way or other God provides for every member of this his great Family, and though he does not always at our
Psal. 105. desire bring Quails, and fill us with the Bread of Heaven, yet he furnishes every one that travels in this Wilderness with a *Viaticum* sufficient to carry him through his Journey; and though he does not grant him his *own* wish, yet he grants him that of a *Wiser* Man, and feeds

feeds him with *food convenient for him.* Pro. 30.

XX.

But theſe are but Prefatory Favours, Dawnings of goodneſs, and little Eſſays of the Divine Love if Compared with thoſe laſt diſplays of his Bounty, thoſe Conſummations of Kindneſs which attend Man in the other World, when God ſhall give him everlaſting felicity, and make him glad with the joy of his Countenance. When he ſhall withdraw his hand from the Cliſt of the Rock, and ſhew him all his Glory. When he ſhall remove the Bounds from the Mount of his Preſence, and admit him to the *Comprehenſions* of an Intuitive Beatitude. This is that great Portion, that Final Patrimony which is laid up for Man, and which (as our Saviour ſays) ſhall be given to thoſe, *for whom it is prepared.* To thoſe, who do not by their own default forfeit their Inheritance with the Saints in Light. Pſal. 21. Ex. 33. Matt. 10.

XXI.

And thus far of those effects of the Divine Goodness to Man, which are manifested by *giving*. The next is that of *forgiving*. This is that peculiar Instance of Favour, whereby Man stands distinguish'd from the rest of the Sons of God, as the great Favorite of Heaven. For though the Angels were all Partakers of God's *Love and Bounty*, yet 'twas Man alone that was made choice of to be the Object of his *Mercy*. Μόνῳ γὰρ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῶν λογικῶν ἐξαίρετον ἔχει τὸ συγγνώμης ἐν τῷ μετανοεῖν ἀξιωθῆναι Says Nemesius. *For 'twas Man alone, among all Rational Beings, who had the Priviledge of being pardon'd by Repentance.* A Favour extraordinary, whether we consider the *great Benefit* that accrues to Man by it, in being freed from the Curse of the Law, and restored to a capacity of arriving to that Happiness, for which he was first designed, or the *wonderful means*

De Nat. Hom. p. 22.

means of effecting it. For that God ſhould bow the Heavens and come down, empty himſelf by taking upon him the Form of a Servant, and humble himſelf yet further, by becoming Obedient even unto Death, this is that Stupendious unutterable inſtance of Mercy, that Myſtery of Goodneſs, which the Angels deſire to look into, which they admire and cannot Comprehend, Sound and cannot Fathom, and which while *they Contemplate, Man enjoys.*

The uſe of this to Devotion.

HAving now *taſted and ſeen* in ſome Meaſure how *good and gracious* the *Lord is*, let us now apply this ſpeculation to the advantage of Devotion. This I ſhall do, Firſt, by conſidering what may be collected to this purpoſe from the Goodneſs of God in General; Secondly, by the ſhewing how the ſeveral Inſtances of the Divine Goodneſs point out to us the exerciſe of ſeveral Devotional vertues. And firſt ſince God is ſo *good a Being*, and ſo good to *Man*, 'twill become us in the firſt place to baniſh all ſuperſtitious ſlaviſh Fears and jealous apprehenſions of him, conſidering that 'tis more for the Honour, and more according to the Will of ſo Good a Being, to be *heartily loved*, than *ſervilely fear'd*, and that 'tis *Love* and not *Fear* that has the Honour to fulfil the whole Law.

Secondly,

Secondly, God being ſo Good, and having ſhewn ſo much Goodneſs to us, 'twill highly become us in the next place to acknowledge this his Goodneſs by all the ways we can, eſpecially by theſe Three, *Praying to him*, *Depending on him*, *and Praiſing him.* By every one of theſe, we acknowledge God's Goodneſs, either directly, or by conſequence; but moſt of all by the *laſt*, which ought therefore to be principally regarded. This I the rather take notice of, becauſe 'tis a thing wherein we are generally defective, for we are all apt to be more zealouſly affected in our *petitionary Prayers*, than in our *giving Thanks.* And the reaſon, I ſuppoſe, is, becauſe our *Prayers* are for *our ſelves*, but *giving Thanks* is to *God.* But certainly this is a great fault, and proceeds from that root of all evil, *ſelf-love*; we ought rather to addreſs our ſelves to God with more Application and Devotion in our *Praiſes* than in our *Prayers.* For he that Praiſes, glorifies God more than

than he that Prays; for he that Prays, does only hope that God *will* be good to him, but he that Praiſes, does *actually* acknowledge that he is already ſo. There is more excellence in *Praiſe* than we are commonly aware of. To *Believe*, *Pray* and *Truſt* is the work of Earth, but to *Adore* and *Praiſe* is the work of Heaven. But not ſo as to be reſerv'd till we come thither. No, we muſt begin it here, or we ſhall never do it hereafter. 'Tis the only retribution God expects from us for all his Goodneſs, to be bleſſed for his Bleſſings; and unleſs we do this, we ſhall be guilty of the higheſt injuſtice and ingratitude imaginable, and of ſuch a vileneſs, as all the *Praying* in the World will never countervail.

But as we are obliged to act thus from God's Goodneſs in general, ſo the ſeveral Inſtances of the Divine Goodneſs point out to us the exerciſe of ſeveral Devotional Vertues. For example, when a Man conſiders God as the Author and Preſer-

ver

ver of his Being, what inference can be more natural, than that he ſhould preſent unto him himſelf, his Soul and Body to be a *reaſonable, holy and lively Sacrifice*, that he ſhould employ all his Powers and Faculties in the Service, and to the Glory of him that gave them, and love him with all his Heart, Mind, Soul and Strength? Again, when he conſiders the guard which Gods Holy Angels keep over him, and the many Deliverances vouchſafed him through their Protection, What inference can be more obvious than that he reſt ſecure under this defence of the moſt High, and abide with confidence under the ſhadow of the Almighty, that he ſing Praiſes to God in the multitude of theſe his *ſtrong* Mercies, and be ever mindful of that ſaying, *Grieve not the Angel, leſt he ſmite thee: do nothing againſt him, leſt he forſake thee.* Again, when he conſiders the plentiful proviſion God has made for him as to this life, that his Lot is fall'n to him in a fair ground, and that he

he has a goodly Heritage, what is more naturally to be inferred than that he offer up to God the Sacrifice of Thankſgiving, for all the Methods, Conveyances and Inſtruments of his Bounty, and that he truſt his Providential care for his future maintainance. Again, when he conſiders that weight of Glory prepared for him in the other World, What can be more natural for him, than with Angels and Archangels, and all the Company of Heaven, to Laud and Magnifie his Glorious Name, and to preſs forward to ſome degrees of *excellency*, in the Service of him who has thus prevented him with ſuch exceſſes of Kindneſs, ſuch depths of unſearchable Love. *Laſtly*, when he conſiders thoſe aſtoniſhing Miracles of the Divine Mercy and condeſcenſion in the Redemption of the World, in the Aſſumption of our Nature, and the humble ſubmiſſion of our Bleſſed Lord to the Pains and Diſhonours of the Croſs, what can be more natural, than that after

ter an Hymn of Praiſe and Adoration to him that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb, he look upon himſelf now as no longer his own, but as bought with a Price; and accordingly glorifie God in his Body and Spirit, which are God's, that he diſhonour not that Nature which is made one with the Divinity, and advanced above the Seraphims; and that laſtly, he endeavour to copy out ſome of the imitable ſtrokes of his Saviours Humility, and (in the Apoſtle's Phraſe) *let the ſame mind be in him which was in Chriſt Jeſus.* 1 Cor. 6.

The

The Aſpiration.

O *My great and good God*, who art good in all thy Greatneſs, and whoſe chiefeſt Greatneſs is to be Good, How can I poſſibly think amiſs of thee, diſtruſt thee, or harbour any jealous apprehenſions concerning thee? And how unworthy ſhould I be of this thy Goodneſs if I ſhould!

But, O God, my Love, 'tis my infirmity to be *afraid* of that Excellence which I ſhould rather *love*, for my love of thee is not yet perfect enough to caſt out all fear; but bleſſed be thy Goodneſs, who in the midſt of my fears and doubtful ſurmiſes art pleaſed to remind me of thy Nature, and to ſay to my Soul, as thou didſt once to the diffident Diſciples, *It is I, be not afraid.*

The Voice of my Beloved! I will therefore turn my fears to love, and love

love more than I ever yet *feared* or *loved*. *I will* alſo *magnifie thee, O God, my King: and I will praiſe thy Name for ever and ever. Every day will I give thanks unto thee: and praiſe thy Name for ever and ever.* For I have *taſted* and *ſeen* how gracious thou art, and I find it is a good thing to Praiſe thee: and that 'tis a joyful and pleaſant thing to be Thankful. I know, O my God, that thy *Goodneſs* is as much above my *Praiſe*, as thy *Greatneſs* is above my *Comprehenſion*. My Praiſes can add nothing to thee, neither can I Praiſe thee according to thy *Goodneſs*. But, O my God, I will Praiſe thee according to my *ſtrength*, and I know that the ſame Goodneſs of thine, which is too great to be *praiſed worthily*, is alſo too great not to *accept* our *unworthy* Praiſes. Pſal. 145.

My God, I know thou requireſt from me only the Praiſes of a *Man*, but I am troubled that I cannot Praiſe thee as an *Angel*. O that I were now in Heaven, if 'twere only

ly that I might Praiſe thee as thy *Angels* Praiſe thee: This, O my God, I will do hereafter, my gratitude ſhall run then as high as theirs, and it ſhall be as laſting too; it ſhall laſt as long as thy Goodneſs and my Being laſts; and as thy *Mercy*, ſo my *Praiſe* ſhall *endure for ever.*

The

THE SECOND PART.

Wherein the

Grounds and Measures

OF

DEVOTION

Are Consider'd from the

Nature of Man.

By *John Norris*, M. A. and Fellow of *All-Souls* Colledge in *Oxford.*

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XUM

Contemplation I.

Of Man, conſider'd as a Creature.

I.

IN Man, as thus conſider'd, I find theſe four things involv'd, Firſt, That he was once Nothing. Secondly, That from Nothing he became Something. Thirdly, That he was made Something, and is what he is by and from God. Fourthly, That he ſo depends upon Gods continual Influence for the continuation of that Being which he receiv'd from him, that ſhould God but never ſo little withdraw it, he muſt neceſſarily fall back into his firſt Nothing.

II.

Firſt, then I conſider that Man was once Nothing, which is the ſame as to ſay, That once he was

not, or that he was not always. This is too acknowledg'd a Propoſition to need any *laborious* Proof, but however for ſatisfaction ſake, I thus demonſtrate it. If Man were always he would be a neceſſary Being. For ſince every thing is neceſſary while it is, and ſince there is no aſſignable Point of Duration wherein that which always is, is not, it follows that if man were always, he would be a neceſſary Being. But now that Man is not a neceſſary Being, I prove thus.

III.

Man has not his Being from himſelf, but from ſome other Being; For if he had it from himſelf, he would never have limited his own Being, and conſequently would have had all other Perfections as well as Exiſtence. But that he has not is plain, becauſe he is an *Amorous* and *Deſiring* Being, and is continually reaching out and aſpiring to ſome further Excellence, which is a certain Argument of *Indigency*. Whence it follows that he had not Being from himſelf.

IV.

IV.

He muſt therefore have it from ſome other Being, that is, He muſt therefore exiſt, becauſe ſome other Being will have him to exiſt. If then the Ground and Reaſon of mans exiſting be the Will and Pleaſure of ſome other Being, then Man muſt ſo far exiſt neceſſarily, as 'tis neceſſary that that other Being ſhould will his exiſtence. Since the neceſſity of the Effect depends upon the neceſſity of the Cauſe: To ſhew therefore that Man does not neceſſarily exiſt, 'twill be enough to ſhew that 'tis not neceſſary that any ſuch Being ſhould will his Exiſtence; which I do thus.

V.

'Tis not neceſſary that any Being ſhould effectually will that which is not neceſſarily Lovely. But Man is not neceſſarily Lovely; therefore 'tis not neceſſary that any Being ſhould effectually will the Being of Man. The firſt Propoſition is Self-evident. The ſecond will be made ſo, by conſidering that neceſſary

Lovelineſs is the higheſt degree of Lovelineſs, and the higheſt degree of Lovelineſs, ſuppoſes the higheſt degree of Excellence; that which is *lovely* in the higheſt degree, muſt be *excellent* in the higheſt degree, every thing being lovely ſo far as it is excellent. But now man is not Excellent in the higheſt degree, becauſe he aſpires to higher excellence (as was ſaid before) and therefore neither is he Lovely in the higheſt degree, and therefore not Neceſſarily Lovely. Which was the Minor Propoſition. The Concluſion therefore follows, that 'tis not neceſſary that any Being ſhould effectually will the being of Man. And therefore alſo 'tis not neceſſary that Man ſhould exiſt, the reaſon of Mans exiſting being founded upon the will of ſome other Being, as was ſuppoſed. And if Man does not exiſt *neceſſarily*, then he did not exiſt *always*; and if not *always*, then once he was not, which was the thing to be here made out.

VI. The

VI.

The next thing to be conſider'd is that Man became Something from Nothing: Which is the ſame as to ſay that he was not made out of any Pre-exiſtent Matter or Subſtance. This, tho it be more ſtrictly verify'd of the *Soul* of Man, which in no ſenſe was raiſed into being from any pre-exiſtent ſubſtance, but came immediately from Nothing to be what it is, yet it is alſo verify'd to all intents and purpoſes in reſpect of his *Body*, which tho it be not *immediately* from Nothing as the Soul is, yet *Mediately* it is, it being form'd not from matter eternally Pre-exiſting, but from Matter which once was Nothing, it being impoſſible that there ſhould be any eternally pre-exiſting matter, or that Matter ſhould always have been, for the very ſame Reaſon that Man could not have been always; which having already ſet down, I ſhall not again repeat it.

VII.

The third thing involv'd in Mans

being a Creature, is that he was made ſomething, and is what he is by and from God. This will be thus Demonſtrated. All Being is either Being *Eſſentially*, that is, Being it ſelf, or Being by *Participation*. Now Being it ſelf is God, as has been ſhewn before: And there can be but one Being it ſelf, as was alſo ſhewn before. Therefore all Beings beſides this one Being it ſelf, beſides God, are Beings by *Participation*. Now whatever is in any thing by Participation, is cauſed in it by that to which it Eſſentially belongs. Man therefore being a Being by Participation, muſt neceſſarily be from and by Being it ſelf; that is, from and by God.

VIII.

Should it be here Objected that Nothing hinders, but that a thing may be found without that which is not of the Reaſon or Eſſence of it, as a Man ſuppoſe without Learning. And that this Habitude of being cauſed by Being it ſelf, or God is not of the eſſence of Beings, becauſe they

they may be conceiv'd without it. And that therefore nothing hinders but that there may be ſome Beings that are not from God. To this I anſwer, That tho this Habitude does not make any part of the Idea or Eſſence of thoſe beings which are cauſed, yet it is neceſſarily conſequent to it. For to be a Being by Participation does as much vertually involve its being cauſed, as a Triangle involves this Affection, that any two ſides of it taken together are greater than the third. So that ſuch a Being can no more exiſt without being *cauſed*, than a Triangle can exiſt without this Affection. But whereas the Habitude of being cauſed, is not of the Reaſon of *Being Simply, or as ſuch*, therefore there is a *Certain* Being that is not cauſed, which is God.

IX.

The ſame Concluſion, that Man has his Being from God, may be further proved from this Conſideration, that none can poſſibly Create but God, The truth of which Propoſition

tion is generally founded upon the Diſtance that is between Being and not Being, which they ſay is infinite, and therefore it muſt require an Infinite Power to educe a thing from one to the other. But this is an obſcure way of arguing, and I muſt profeſs that I do not ſo clearly underſtand it as to be ſatisfy'd whether it be concluſive or no; and therefore I ſhall rather chuſe to ſay, that the moſt univerſal effect muſt have the moſt univerſal cauſe. But now among all Effects, to make a thing to *be Simply* is the moſt Univerſal. And this is *Creation*, which implies not only a production of this or that Being, or of a Being according to this or that Nature or Quality, (for this is alſo done in *Generation* and *Alteration*) but alſo of Being Abſolutely: For the immediate Terms of Creation are from *not being* to *be*, and then afterwards comes in to be *this* or *that*, *thus* or *thus*. Creation therefore is the moſt Univerſal Effect that is, and conſequently it muſt be reduced into the moſt

moſt Univerſal Cauſe that is, which is God. Therefore God only can Create, therefore all Creatures are from God, and conſequently Man receives his Being from no other but God.

X.

'Tis now further to be conſider'd, that as man receives his being from God, ſo he depends upon God's continual influence for the continuation of it, inſomuch, that ſhould God never ſo little withdraw it, he muſt neceſſarily fall back into his Firſt Nothing. For beſides, that to continue in being is as much an *Univerſal Effect* as to make to be, and conſequently muſt be reſolv'd into the ſame Univerſal Cauſe, which is God. I further conſider, that Being by Participation is wholly and intirely from Being it ſelf. Now every Effect depends upon its Cauſe as far as it is its Cauſe. If a Partial Cauſe, then it depends upon it Partially, if an Intire Cauſe, than it depends upon it Intirely. Since therefore Being by Participation is wholly and intirely

intirely from Being it ſelf, it follows that it muſt depend wholly and intirely upon it, and if ſo, then it muſt depend upon it for every minute of its Exiſtence, as well as for the very firſt Inſtant of it; otherwiſe it would not depend upon it wholly and intirely (as is ſuppoſed) there being ſomething in reference to which it would be Independent.

XI.

Medit. De Prima Philoſop. Medit. 3.

I further conſider with *Carteſius*, that ſince the Time of our Life conſiſts of innumerable Parts, every one of which does by no means depend upon that which went before, from our exiſting a little before it, does no way follow that we ſhall exiſt Now. I ſay, it does no way follow, that becauſe we exiſted a little before, we ſhall therefore exiſt now; or that becauſe of our exiſting now, we ſhall exiſt afterwards, there being no neceſſary Connexion between the Moments themſelves, whereof our Duration is made up. If therefore we do exiſt in ſeveral Inſtants or *Nows* of Time, this muſt be from ſome

ſome Cauſe which conſerves us, and as it were gives us being in every one of thoſe *Nows* or *Moments*. But this cannot be our ſelves, firſt, for the reaſon alledg'd by *Carteſius*, becauſe we are not *Conſcious* of any ſuch Power, which undoubtedly we ſhould be, if we had it. And Secondly, becauſe we might then have given our ſelves the *Firſt Now* or Moment of exiſtence as well as any of the *Reſt*. For the Firſt Now of Exiſtence differs no otherwiſe from any of the reſt but only as to *Novitas Eſſendi*, or the *Newneſs* of *exiſting*, which is only an extrinſical Relation, and ſuch as adds nothing to the difficulty or greatneſs of the Effect; which being the ſame on both hands, the Cauſe muſt alſo be of equal Force and Vertue. But we could not give Being to our ſelves (as was before proved) and therefore neither are we able to Conſerve our ſelves in being. The Cauſe therefore by which we are Conſerv'd in being, muſt be the ſame which gave us Being, that is, God; without whoſe continued Influence

fluence we can no more *go on* in our Exiſtence, than we could at *Firſt Be.*

XII.

This I cannot better illuſtrate than by that dependence which an Image in the Glaſs has upon the Face whoſe Reflexion it is. The Image is not only cauſed by the acceſs of the Face to the Glaſs, but does alſo ſo neceſſarily and ſubſtantially depend upon and ſubſiſt by its Preſence, that at the firſt removal of it, it immediately vaniſhes and diſappears. And ſo 'tis with us, we are not only at firſt brought into being by God, but do alſo all along ſo depend upon his Influence for the carrying on our being through the ſeveral Diſtinct Moments of time, that ſhould this Influence but never ſo little be withdrawn or intercepted, we ſhould immediately ſink down into our *Firſt Nothing.*

XIII.

And were it not thus, 'twould be impoſſible that God ſhould ever *Annihilate.* For Annihilation cannot be done by any *Poſitive* Act, becauſe the

the Term of Annihilation is, *not being* Simply. But now every Positive Act tends to *being*. So that even Physical Corruption is not a Positive Motion, but only in as much as at the Exclusion of one Form another is introduced by way of *Concomitancy*. Much less therefore can Annihilation be Positive. If therefore God be able to Annihilate it can be only by *Privation*, that is, by suspending that Influence upon which we depended for every Moment of our Existence; and without which we cannot exist. And thus *Job* expresses the Mode of Annihilation, when he says, *O that it would please God to destroy me, that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off.* Job 6.

XIV.

As for the *Particular Mode* of our dependence upon God, and what this Divine Influence is whereby we are Conserv'd in being, this is a Theory much above our Capacity to Comprehend, and therefore I shall not much employ my Curiosity about it. But might I have leave

leave to *Divine*, I would ſay, That the Creature depends upon God after ſome ſuch way as the Image in the Glaſs does upon the Face. That this Ectypal World is only the Image or Reflexion of the Archetypal or Ideal World, and ſo depends upon it, and ſubſiſts by it, as all other Images do upon their Originals. And that the *Preſentialneſs* of this *Ideal World* muſt be ſuppoſed to be ſome way or other *intercepted* in order to the *Annihilation* of either this whole *Ectypal World*, or of any particular Creature in it. And this ſeems to have good foundation in Scripture, which ſays, that all things are upheld, or born by the *Word* of God's Power, that is, by the Divine λόγος, the *Ideal* or *Archetypal World*; by whom alſo in the ſame place, the Worlds are ſaid to have been *made*.

Heb. 1.

The

The Uſe of this to Devotion.

GReat is the advantage that may be made hence, to the purpoſes of Devotion. For, *firſt*, if Man was once nothing, this lays a very proper and reaſonable ground for *Humility* and *Poverty of Spirit*. 'Tis uſually thought a very *humbling* conſideration, to remind a Perſon of the meanneſs of his *Original*. But, now, what Original can be ſo mean as to come from *nothing*? Now this is the condition of Man. He had his Riſe from *nothing*, and derives his Pedegree, by his *Mothers ſide*, from Darkneſs and Emptineſs. And tho' now by the Omnipotence of his Creator he is ſomething, yet ſtill he *holds* his being as precariouſly as he *firſt receiv'd* it, and depends as much for his exiſtence upon the Will of his Creator, as Light does upon the Sun. God *ſpake the word*, indeed, before he was *made*; but to *unmake* him, he need only be *ſilent*, and not ſuſtain him by the *Word of his Power*. And ſhall that

Being be *Proud* which was once *nothing*, and needs only a *meer Negative* to bring him to nothing again? No, ſays the wiſe Man, *Pride was not made for man: nor furious anger for them that are born of a woman.*

Secondly, As this affords us grounds of Humiliation, as to our ſelves, ſo we have hence reaſon to adore and magnifie that *Power* which was ſo great as to be *able*, and that *Goodneſs* which was ſo great as to be *willing* to bring us from nothing to ſomething.

And ſince all this proceeds wholly from God, to whom we not only owe our beings, but our whole perſeverance in being; hence in the laſt place appears the great equity of giving up our whole ſelves, our Soul, Body and Spirit, to the Service and Glory of that God in whom we live, move, and have our being; which, conſidering the great Benefit of Creation, and the Right which God thereby acquires over us, muſt needs be a very *reaſonable Service and Sacrifice.*

The

The Aſpiration.

MY *God*, *my Creator*, how can I be ever ſufficiently *humble*, when I conſider that I once was not; when I conſider that even thou with all thy Omnipotence can'ſt not reduce me to a lower degree of nothing than that from whence thou took'ſt me! When I conſider that I ſtill ſo depend upon thee, that I cannot ſubſiſt one moment without thee! What a *vanity*, what a *ſhadow*, what a *nothing* then am I, who once was not, and now am only becauſe Thou art, and can no longer ſtand in being than ſupported by the Arm of thy Power!

O my God, I know not whether of the two I ought more to Adore and Magnifie, either that *Power* that could raiſe me from nothing, to be what I am, or that *Goodneſs* which could determine that Power to ſo ſtrange and wonderful a Production. *One deep*, O my God, *calleth upon another*, and my thoughts are all loſt and ſwallow'd up in *both*.

Praiſe and Adoration be to thee, O my great and good God, for 'twas from thy Power and Goodneſs that I receiv'd my Being. *Thou art he that took me out of my Mothers Womb, and thou alſo waſt my hope when I hanged yet upon my Mothers Breaſt. I have been alſo left unto thee ever ſince I was born: thou art my God even from my Mothers Womb. My Soul ſtill hangeth upon thee: thy right Hand does uphold me. Thou holdeſt my Soul in life, and ſuffereſt not my Feet to ſlip.*

To thee then, O *Father of Spirits*, I give up and devote my whole ſelf, for I am intirely from thee, intirely by thee, and therefore intirely thine. How then can I ever offend thee, or rebel againſt thee, with thoſe Powers which thou haſt given me, and doſt ſtill uphold and maintain in me! My God, I will not, but as thou art he whoſe I am, ſo thou ſhalt be he whom I will ever ſerve. Free me therefore, O God, from my Paſſions, and make me but once *my Own*, and I will then ever be *Thine*. Amen.

Con-

Contemplation II.

Of Man consid'r'd as an Intelligent Creature.

I.

IN the Creation of Man there are two things chiefly to be remarked. *First*, The *Councel and Deliberation* of the Bleſſed Trinity, expreſſed in theſe words: *Let us make man. Secondly*, The *immediate Pattern* or Platform, according to which he was to be made, expreſſed in theſe words, *In our Image, after our own likeneſs.* Now both theſe denote the peculiar excellency of human Nature; but eſpecially the latter: for what can make more for the excellency of Man's compoſition, than to ſay, that he was made after the *Divine likeneſs.*

II.

This Divine likeneſs, not to mention any other inſtances of reſem-

blance, I take to be moſt conſpicuous in this, that as in the Divine Nature there are two Proceſſions; one by way of *Intellect*, which is the λόγος, or Word, and the other by way of *Love*, which is the Holy Spirit. So likwiſe in the human Nature there are as it were two Proceſſions, and that of the ſame kind too as in the Divine, *Underſtanding* and *Love*. By theſe two Noble and Divine Powers branching forth from the Soul, Man chiefly reſembles God, and becomes a little Image of the Trinity.

III.

My buſineſs at preſent is only with the firſt of theſe, namely, the *Underſtanding* of Man, or to conſider Man as an *Intelligent* Creature. Here therefore I ſhall ſhew, *firſt*, the *Kinds* of human Knowledge; *Secondly*, the *Mode* of it. Now, as to the Kinds of human Knowledge, I conſider, that ſince Knowledge in general (as was before noted) is a *Comprehenſion of Truth*, as many ways as a Man may comprehend Truth,

Contemt. 5.

Truth, ſo many ways he may be ſaid to know. Now a Man may comprehend Truth, either as to *Simple Eſſences*, or as to their *Complex Habitudes*, or as to the *Dependence* that is between one Habitude and another. The firſt of theſe is what we uſually call Apprehenſion, the ſecond is what we call Judgment, and the laſt is what we call Diſcourſe. Thus we are authorized to ſpeak by the Schools, who aſcribe Judgment and Diſcourſe to the Underſtanding; tho' I am rather of Monſieur *Malebranche* his mind, that there is no other Operation of the *Intellect* but only *Perception*, and that Judgment and Diſcourſe more properly belong to the *Will*, as being an embracing of, and an adheſion to Truth. But then, withal, it muſt be acknowledg'd, that there is a threefold Perception. One whereby I perceive a ſimple Object, without any relation which may be call'd a ſimple Perception. Another, when I perceive the relations of ſimple Eſſences, which may

De inquirend. verit. lib. 1. cap. 2.

be called a Judicial Perception. And a third, when I perceive the relation that is between those relations, which may be call'd a Rational Perception. This is the whole Latitude, and full Compass of the Intellect, and that which belongs to Intellect in common, whether Human or Divine.

IV.

For I think it no absurdity to say, that in this sense God has *Reason* and *Discourse*. For 'tis most certain that he does not only perceive the simple Essences of things, and their relations, but also the relation that is between those relations. Only there is this difference, that God perceives all this at once, with one intire simple view; whereas Man is fain to *open his prospect* by degrees, by advancing step by step from one proposition to another in the *field* of Truth. Which, tho' it has appropriated to it self the name of *Reason*, yet I think it does not belong to the *nature* of Reason in *general*, but is rather an *accidental defect*

fect of it, ſuch as proceeds from the *narrowneſs* of *created*, or of ſuch or *ſuch* created Capacities. This muſt not therefore be made neceſſary to *Reaſon* (that being ſufficiently ſalv'd in perceiving the relation that is between the Habitudes of things) but only to *human Reaſon*.

V.

And thus much as to the *Kinds* of human Knowledge. I come now to explain the *Mode* of it, by ſhewing how Man underſtands. This perhaps will appear a deſperate undertaking at firſt ſight, but I think the difficulty proceeds more from the prejudices of our Education than from the remoteneſs of the Theory. For were we not otherwiſe prepoſſeſt from the Principles of the vulgar Philoſophy, what would be more familiar and obvious than to conclude that we ſee and know all things in *God*? This is a Notion which I very early lighted upon, by the *Natural Parturiency* of my own mind, before I had conſulted with any Authors that might imbue

imbue me with it. But afterwards I met with ſome that *confirm'd* me in it. For it is a Notion very frequently touch'd upon by *Platoniſts*; by *Plotinus*, by *Proclus*, by *Marſilius Ficinus*, by St. *Auſtin*, by the late *French* Philoſopher *Du Hamel*, in his Book *De Mente Humana*, and is ſometimes glanced at by *Aquinas* himſelf, but by none that I know of ſo copiouſly, ſo purpoſely, and ſo dextrouſly managed, as by the incomparable Monſieur *Malebranche*, who, I think, has eſtabliſhed the truth of it beyond all cavil or exception, as well as reaſonable doubting. I ſhall therefore, for the clearing of this Argument, firſt give a ſhort and ſummary account of what that excellent Perſon has meditated upon it, and then ſubjoin ſome further conſiderations of my own to the ſame purpoſe.

VI.

De inquirend. verit. l. 3. part. 2. c. 1.

Firſt then Monſieur *Malebranche* lays down this *preparatory* Poſition, that thoſe Objects which are without the Soul, cannot be perceiv'd by

by themſelves, but by the Mediation of *Ideas*. This Propoſition is moſt unqueſtionable, taking Ideas in a large ſignification for Images or Repreſentations of things. For things that are perceiv'd muſt be ſome way or other Preſent to the Soul, either by *themſelves* or by the *Repreſentatives*. And ſince they are not by themſelves, they muſt by their Ideas. And ſo much is acknowledg'd on all ſides. Here therefore being no *Controverſie*, there needs no more Proof.

VII.

This premiſed, he thus proceeds. It is therefore neceſſary that theſe Ideas which we have of Objects without, ſhould either proceed from thoſe Objects: Or that our Mind has a Power of Producing thoſe Ideas. Or that God ſhould produce them with the Mind when he creates it, or that he ſhould produce them as often as we think of any Object. Or that our Mind ſhould poſſeſs in it ſelf all the Perfections which it ſees in things. Or laſtly, that it be united to ſome Abſolutely Perfect

ſect Being, that includes in himſelf all the Perfections of Created Beings. By one of theſe ways we muſt neceſſarily perceive whatever we perceive.

VIII.

The firſt is according to the vulgar Philoſopy, which teaches that external Objects ſend forth certain Species like themſelves, and that theſe Species are carried by the external Senſes to the *common Senſory*, and that then they are refined, and ſpritualized by the help of that which they call *Intellectus Agens*, and ſo become *Intelligible*, then are receiv'd into the *Intellectus Paſſivus*, and then are *actually underſtood*. This certainly is either very profound ſenſe, or very profound nonſenſe, one of the two, and is rather like the *Anatomical* Account how the *Chyle* is turn'd into *Blood*, than like a *Metaphyſical* account of the *way of underſtanding*. But that this Hypotheſis cannot be true, our Author ſhews from the impoſſibility of Objects ſending forth ſuch Species,

cies, which he proves first from the *Impenetrability* of *Bodies*. Which must needs hinder that these Species which are nothing else but *Corporeal effluvias*, should possess the *same Ubi*, which yet must be, if, by them Objects are render'd visible, because the whole Medium, and every part of it, must be supposed full of them.

IX.

This he proves, Secondly, from the *change* or *variation* of the Species. For 'tis most certain, that the nearer the Object, the greater it shews. But now what should afterwards diminish this Species, and what is become of those parts whereof it consisted, when it appear'd greater? And what is it that so suddenly augments it, when 'tis beheld through a *Telescope*?

X.

The same he proves further from the consideration of a *perfect Cube*, all the *Species* of whose sides are unequal, and yet the *sides themselves* are equally square. And Lastly,

ly, he ſenſures it as an unconceivable ſuppoſition, that a Body ſhould continually ſend forth Species every where, ſo as to fill every Point of ſuch vaſt ſpaces, and yet not be *ſenſibly* diminiſh'd. This firſt Hypotheſis therefore cannot be true,

XI.

The ſecond is, that our Mind has a Power of Producing theſe Ideas. This he alſo ſhews to be falſe from the Abſurdity that would thence follow, which is that Man would then be able to *Create*. The conſequence he proves by ſhewing that theſe Ideas are *Real Beings*, becauſe they have real Properties, and differ one from another, and repreſent things really different. And that they are alſo *Spiritual Beings*, and that then Man would be able to Create more Noble Entities than the *Material World*, which is the workmanſhip of God.

XII.

XII.

Our Author further ſhews that our Mind would not *uſe* this Creative Power, though She had it, from the *Inſtance* of a *Painter*. For as a Painter, though never ſo skilful, cannot repreſent a Creature which he never ſaw, and whereof he has no Idea; ſo a Man cannot form the Idea of an Object, unleſs he firſt knows it, that is, unleſs he has an Idea of it, which does not depend upon his own will. Now if he already has the Idea of that Object, certainly he knows it, and then it is to no purpoſe for him to form again a *new* Idea of it. This Power therefore of Producing Ideas is given to Man in vain, therefore it ought not to be given, therefore this ſecond Hypotheſis is not true.

XIII.

The third is, that God produces theſe Ideas, either with the Mind, or whenever we think of any Object. That this cannot be true as to the firſt part, he ſhews from the

Infinite

Infinite number of Ideas which muſt be ſuppoſed in proportion to the Infinite number of things, which he exemplifies in *Mathematical figures*, and the *Combinations* thence ariſing. 'Tis not in the firſt place probable that God ſhould create ſo many things with every Soul; But Secondly, ſuppoſe he ſhould, and the Mind, were a *Magazine* of all manner of Ideas, yet 'twould be an invincible Difficulty to ſhew how the Mind among ſuch an Infinite number of Ideas, ſhould be able, and that ſo readily, to pick out thoſe which it has occaſion for. It ought not therefore to be ſaid that Ideas are *Created with us.*

XIV.

And there is as little ground to ſuppoſe that God does every moment produce in us as many ſeveral Ideas, as we conceive things. For beſides that this has already been ſufficiently overthrown in the other, 'tis further to be conſider'd, that we muſt then always actually have in us the Ideas of all things, ſeeing that

that at all times we can will to think of all things: Which we could not do if we had not already a *confuſe* Perception of them, that is, unleſs an Infinite number of Ideas were continually before our Minds. For we can not be willing to think of that whereof we have *no* Idea. But we cannot have all this Infinity of Ideas at once in our ſelves, therefore this third Hypotheſis is not true.

XV.

The fourth is that the Mind needs no other thing but *it ſelf* for the Perception of Objects, and that by Contemplating *it ſelf* and her own Perfections, She can perceive all *External* Objects. This is the boldeſt Aſſertion of all, and is full of *Impiety* as well as *Abſurdity*. They that will maintain this muſt be obliged to ſay that the Mind of Man has in it ſelf the Perfections of all things, ſince it cannot *ſee* in it ſelf what it *has* not in it ſelf, and then they would do well to conſider whether this be not to make a

God of the *Soul*; For 'tis God only who has in himself the Perfections of all things, and who therefore sees by his *own Light*.

XVI.

Having thus overthrown these four Hypotheses concerning the Mode of our understanding, Our most Ingenious Author proceeds to the remaining one, *that we see all things in God*. Which though it be sufficiently establish'd in the overthrow of the rest, yet he goes on to a more immediate and direct proof of it. In order to which he premises two *Postulatums* which he had before prov'd, First, that God has in himself the Ideas of all things. This he had before concluded from Gods creating all things, which he could not do without having in himself the Ideas of all things. And this I have also demonstrated in my fifth Contemplation, by a distinct Argument taken from the being of *Necessary and Eternal Truths*. The second *Postulatum* is that God is intimately by his Presence united

ted to our Minds, ſo that God may be ſaid to be the *Place* of *Spirits*, as *Space* is the Place of *Bodies*. Theſe two things being ſuppoſed, it is moſt certain that the Mind may ſee all things in God, if God will be pleaſed to diſplay theſe Ideas to her, there being then nothing to hinder it. And that 'tis the will and Pleaſure of God ſo to do, rather than create an Infinite number of Ideas in every Mind, he thus proves.

XVII.

Firſt, from the *general Oeconomy of the univerſe*, wherein 'tis obſervable that God never does that by *difficult* ways, which may be done by *ſimple* and *eaſie* ways: that is, God never does any thing *in vain*, and without Cauſe: When therefore God may by himſelf open and exhibit to us all things barely by willing that we ſhould ſee thoſe Ideas which are in him, 'tis no way probable that to obtain the *ſame* end, he ſhould produce ſuch an infinite Multitude of Ideas as are ne-

ceſſary to that variety and multiplicity of Knowledge, that is in all Created Minds.

XVIII.

This Mode of Intelligence our Author further recommends, by conſidering that by this way Created Minds are placed in the *greateſt dependence* upon God that can poſſibly be. For upon this Hypotheſis we cannot only ſee nothing but what God will let us ſee, but we can alſo ſee nothing but what God *exhibits* to us to be ſeen. Neither can our Minds be ſaid ſufficiently to depend upon God in all its operations, if they are ſuppoſed to have all that is neceſſary for action, that is, to have in themſelves the Ideas of all things always preſent.

XIX.

This again he more ſtrongly inforces by an Argument taken from the *Manner* of our Minds *perceiving* all things. For we all find by certain experience that when we are minded to think of any particular thing, we firſt caſt our eyes about upon all

all Beings, and then at laſt, adhere to the conſideration of that Object, which we intended to think upon. Now 'tis paſt all queſtion that we cannot deſire to ſee any Object, but we muſt ſee it already, although *Confuſely*, and after a *general* kind of a way. So that ſince we can deſire to ſee all Objects, now this, now that, hence it will certainly follow, that all Beings are Preſent to our minds. But now all Beings cannot any other way be preſent to the mind, but becauſe *God* is preſent to it, who in the Simplicity of his Being comprehends all beings. The ſame may be further confirm'd from the Perception of *Univerſals*. Which the mind could not well be ſuppoſed able to repreſent unleſs it ſaw *all* Beings included in *One*. For ſince every *Created* thing is an *Individual*, no one can ſay that he perceives any thing *Created*, when he perceives, ſuppoſe, a *Triangle* in *general*. This well deſerves to be conſider'd.

XX.

Again our Ingenious Author argues from the *Idea* which we have of *Infinite*. For 'tis plain that we *perceive* Infinites, though we do not *comprehend* it, and that our mind has a very Distinct Idea of God, which it could not have but by its union *with* God. Since 'tis absurd to suppose that the Idea of God should be from any thing that is *Created*.

XXI.

He further Considers that the Mind has not only an *Idea* of *Infinite*, but that it also has it *before* it has any Idea of *finite*. For we conceive *Infinite* Being, barely by conceiving *Being*, without considering whether it be *finite* or *Infinite*. But now to conceive any *finite* Being, we must *detract* something from that *general* Notion of Being, which by consequence must be *Antecedent*. Our mind therefore perceives nothing but *in* the *Idea* which it has of *Infinite*. And this Idea is so far from being form'd from

from a *Confuſe* heaping together of the Ideas of *ſpecial* Beings, as Philoſophers commonly pretend, that all thoſe Special Ideas are nothing elſe but *Participations* from the *general* Idea of *Infinite*. Even as God does not hold his Being from the Creatures, but all Creatures ſubſiſt only by him.

XXII.

He adds one Argument more which he thinks will go for Demonſtration, with thoſe who are uſed to Abſtract ways of Reaſoning. It is impoſſible that God in any of his actions ſhould have any *Principal End* different from *himſelf*. This is a Common Notion with every Attentive Thinker. And the Scripture ſuffers us not to doubt but that God made all things for himſelf. It is neceſſary therefore that not only our Natural Love, that is, the motion which he produces in us, ſhould tend towards himſelf, but that moreover that *Knowledge and Light*, which he beſtows upon our mind ſhould open and exhibit to us ſomething

that is in *himſelf*. For whatſoever comes from God cannot be for any other beſides God. If God ſhould Create a Mind and give it the Sun, ſuppoſe, for its Idea, or immediate Object of Knowledge, God would then make that Mind for the Sun, and not for himſelf.

XXIII.

God therefore cannot make a mind to know his Works, unleſs that mind do in ſome manner ſee *God* when it ſees his Works; ſo that I may venture to ſay, that if we did not ſome way or other *ſee God*, we ſhould *ſee nothing* at all. Even as if we did not *love God*; that is, if God did not continually impreſs upon us the love of good in general, we ſhould *love nothing* at all. For ſince this Love is the ſame with our will, we cannot Love or will any thing without him, ſince we cannot love Particular goods but by determining towards thoſe goods that motion of Love which God gives us towards himſelf. We *love* therefore nothing but by that neceſſary

ceſſary love by which we are moved towards God, and we *ſee* nothing but by that Natural Knowledge which we have of God. And all thoſe *Special* Ideas which we have of the *Creatures*, are nothing elſe but *Limitations* of the Idea of the *Creator*, as all the motion of our *Will* towards the *Creatures* are nothing elſe but *Determinations* of that motion which is toward the *Creator*.

XXIV.

He appeals laſt of all to *Scripture*, which in divers places gives abundant confirmation to this Hypotheſis. As when we are ſaid, *not to be ſufficient of our ſelves, to think any thing as of our ſelves*, but that *our ſufficiency is of God.* Again, God is ſaid to have *ſhewn* unto the *Gentiles what might be known of him.* Again, God is call'd, the *father of lights.* God is alſo ſaid, by the *Pſalmiſt*, *to teach man Knowledge. Laſtly*, He is ſaid, to be *the true light, which inlightens every man that comes into the world.*

2 Cor. 3. 5.
Rom. 1. 19.
James 1. 17.
Joh. 1. 9.

XXV.

XXV.

From all which, he concludes, that *God* is the *Intelligible World*, or the *Place of Spirits*, as the *Material* World is the *place of Bodies*. That these Spirits receive their *Modifications*, or *Sensations*, from his *Power*, and find their *Idea's* in his *Wisdom*, and by his *Love* are moved by all orderly *motions*; and that in God we have our Life, our Motion, and our Being. According to that of St. *Paul*, *He is not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being.*

Act. 17. 28.

XXVI.

And thus in as short a compass as I could comprize it, have I given a summary account of what the excellent Monsieur *Malebranche* has at large delivered upon this Theory, *of our seeing all things in God.* I shall now further establish it by some other considerations of my own.

XXVII.

That all our Intellectual Perception is by Ideas, that is, not by the immediate

immediate preſence of things themſelves, but by ſomething that intimately and immediately repreſents them to our mind, is a thing plain in it ſelf, and by all ſo acknowledged. And that all the Idea's of things, with their reſpective habitudes and relations are in God, I have abundantly *proved*; and alſo as to the manner, *explained* in my Contemplation of the *Divine Omniſcience*. The thing now to be conſider'd is, whether we do not ſee and know whatever we ſee and know in God; that is, whether thoſe Idea's which are in God, be not the very Idea's which we ſee, and the immediate Object of our Knowledge and Perception.

XXVIII.

That it is ſo, beſides what Monſieur *Malebranche* has offered upon this Argument, I further prove by conſidering, firſt, That ſince Knowledge is comprehenſion of Truth, if the Truth which I comprehend be in God, and in him only, then I muſt be ſaid to ſee and know whatever

ever I see and know in God. This is a plain and easie consequence. And that the Truth which I comprehend is in God only, I thus make out.

XXIX.

The nature of Truth consists in a certain mutual respect or habitude of simple Essences one to another. But these relations which I comprehend, and which are the same with *Truth*, are not verified of the simple Essences, as they are in their *External* and *Natural subsistencies*, but as they are in the *Divine Idea's*. I deny not but that there may be relation between things in their *natural subsistencies*, but I say that is not the relation which I *primely* and *directly behold* when I contemplate Truth. For, first, things according to their Natural subsistencies are *Temporary*, and once were not, but the relation which I behold is *Eternal*, and was from everlasting; and consequently cannot be the relation of things according to their subsistence in *Nature.*

ture. Again, the Eſſences of things, as to their *Natural* ſubſiſtence, may *ceaſe* to be, but the relation which I behold is *Immutable* and *Immortal*, and will be ever the ſame. Again, things as they are in *Nature*, are not, even while they are, according to that *exactneſs* according to which we diſcern ſome certain relations to belong to them. Thus for inſtance, when I define a right Line to be that which lies equally between its two Points, is there, can there be any ſuch Line in Nature to which this relation may belong? This relation therefore is not the relation of any *Line* in *Nature*, but of a Line in *Idea.* And ſo 'tis in all other inſtances; the relations which we behold are not the relations of any *Natural*, but of *Ideal Entities.* Theſe are the things which are *properly* related, other things are ſo only by *accident* and *reductively* as they come under theſe. And 'tis the relation of theſe which we properly *diſcern*, and which are the *prime*, *direct*, and *immediate* object

ject of our Perception, the relations of other things come under a *ſecondary diſcernment*, and they are only ſo far beheld, as they are beheld in theſe.

XXX.

And this is what the Schools themſelves muſt of neceſſity come to, if they would but attend to the conſequence of what they affirm, when they ſay, That *Science is not of Singulars, but of Univerſal and Abſtract Natures.* For where are theſe Univerſal Natures? Not in this *Ectypal World.* Whatever is here, is *Singular, this* or *that.* It muſt be therefore in the *Ideal* or *Archetypal World*, that is, in the Divine Nature, as exhibitive of that which is created, where theſe Univerſal Natures, which are the proper objects of Science, are to be found. And conſequently, 'tis in God that we know all the Truth, which we know.

XXXI.

And this very Notion *Aquinas* had once plainly light upon, however

ever he came afterwards to loſe it. For, ſays he, in expreſs terms, *It is neceſſary to ſay that the human Soul knows all things in their Eternal Reaſons, by the participation of which we know all things. For that Intellectual Light which is in us, is nothing elſe but a participated ſimilitude of that increated Light in which the Eternal Reaſons are contain'd.* This is almoſt as plain an acknowledgment of our ſeeing all things in God as one would wiſh; and differs little or nothing from that celebrated Definition *Plato* gives of Knowledge, which he calls, *A Participation of Ideas.* Part. 1. §. 84. Ar. 5.

XXXII.

But to proceed, if the Truth which we ſee be not in God, I would fain know whence has it its *Unity* and *Identity*, its *Steddineſs* and *Immutability*, its *Everlaſtingneſs* and *Perpetuity?* Whence is it that 'tis alike diſcern'd by *different minds*, and by the *ſame* mind at *different times?* We have nothing in our *ſelves* but what is flux and mutable, and

and the things without us are as mutable and uncertain as we our ſelves. Again, whence is it that Truth is preſent in all *places*, and that *independently* upon our *thinking or knowing?* For, ſuppoſe all the Men and Angels in the World ſhould ſuſpend thinking, yet the exiſtence of Truth would not be thereby ſuſpended, but remain as it was before. For by thinking we do not *make* Truth, but only perceive it as it is in *it ſelf*, by attending to that Light which ſhines upon us, and is intimately preſent with us. Truth therefore will exiſt and be always the ſame, whether we think or no; which is a plain Argument that tho' it be *in* us, yet 'tis nothing of *ours*, nor is at all dependent upon our underſtandings, but only upon his who *is neceſſarily*, and is in *all places*, and is *Truth it ſelf*.

XXXIII.

This concluſion may be further inferr'd from the *Permanency* and *Immutable Stability* of ſimple Idea's.

I find

I find in my mind certain Idea's of a fix'd and unalterable Nature, ſuch as I can neither add any thing to, or at all diminiſh from. Thus for inſtance, the Idea of a *Triangle* has a determinate and immutable Nature, ſuch as is not in my power any way to alter. I can, indeed, ceaſe to think of a *Triangle*, and convert my mind to the ſpeculation of ſome other Figure. But whenſoever I do think of a *Triangle*, I cannot help repreſenting it to my mind after one and the ſame determinate way. Which is a certain Argument that this Idea is not of my own raiſing or forming, for then it would be *Arbitrary*, and I might vary it at pleaſure; but that 'tis an *abſolute Nature*, diſtinct from, and independent on my Underſtanding; and, indeed, that 'tis no other than the *Divine Eſſence* it ſelf, after a ſpecial mode of *Exhibition* or *Imitability*: for nothing but God himſelf is *abſolutely Immutable*. He only being that *Father* of *Lights*, in whom is no varying, nor ſhadow of turning.

XXXIV.

This, again, may be further argued, from our *desire* of *Knowledge*, and from the *manner* of our *attaining* to it. As to the desire of Knowledge, I remark this, That among all the things which are *knowable*, there is not one which I may not, nay, which I do not actually desire to know. But now I cannot have any desire of that whereof I have no manner of Knowledge. For desire proceeds from Knowledge, and consequently pre-supposes it. I must therefore be supposed to have already *some* Knowledge of all that I desire to know; that is, I must have a *confuse* Knowledge of that which I desire to know *clearly* and *distinctly*. And therefore since I desire to know, or may desire to know every thing clearly and distinctly, I must be allowed to have a *confuse* Knowledge of every thing. But, now, how can this be, but by my having all things actually present to my mind? And how can this be, but by my having a *confuse* glance

glance of that Being in whom are all things, and who is *All?*

XXXV.

Then as to the *manner* of our *attaining* to Knowledge, 'tis a thing in the firſt place worth conſidering, How a Child comes to learn his firſt Language. To know a Language, is to know that ſuch a word is to go as a ſign for ſuch a thing. Now of words there are ſome to which the thing that anſwers is *material* and *ſenſible*. Others, again, there are to which the things that anſwer are *purely Intellectual*. This premiſed, I demand how a Child comes to underſtand the firſt Language which he learns? You will ſay, by frequent hearing the word repeated, when at the ſame time the thing is pointed to, he begins at length to collect that ſuch a word is to go for ſuch a thing; and ſo to call a Table, a Table, and a Stool, a Stool. True, this ſerves well enough to explain how we may learn the meaning of ſuch words to which ſomething

ſenſible anſwers. But this won't at all help us out in accounting for the underſtanding words which ſignifie *pure Intellectual Notions.* For theſe cannot be *pointed* at when I hear the word, as in the other caſe, becauſe not *preſent*, nor *ſenſible*, and therefore ſhould the word be never ſo often ſaid over to me, I might indeed grow familiar with the *ſound*, but I ſhould never be able thence to underſtand that this word is to be joined as a *ſign* to ſuch an *Idea.* As for inſtance, ſhould I hear this word *Vertue* repeated to me daily, I ſhould in a little time come to be acquainted with the ſound, ſo as to know it again from any other ſound; but ſure were I to hear it to Eternity, I ſhould never thence be inſtructed among all thoſe Intellectual Idea's which I have, which was ſignifi'd by that word, neither of them being to be pointed to when I heard the ſound. And yet we find by experience that Children do make a ſhift to find out this, and that they learn the meaning

meaning of ſuch words whoſe Idea's are *Intellectual*, almoſt as ſoon as they do the *other*, and that at an Age when their *obſervation* is next to none at all. But how they come to do this is an amazing thing to conſider. And truly I have no other way to ſolve the difficulty, but by ſuppoſing that as often as they hear ſuch words to which the Notions that anſwer are *purely Intellectual*; and conſequently not be pointed at when the word is ſpoken: God then, who is never wanting in *neceſſaries*, ſupplies the part of the *Teacher*, by exhibiting ſuch a part of the *Ideal World* to the mind of the Child, as is ſignified by ſuch an arbitrary ſign. And this *exhibition* being thus occaſionally vouchſafed by God whenever ſuch words are repeated, has the ſame effect to make the Child underſtand the meaning of words, whoſe Notions are *purely Intellectual*, as *pointing* to the ſenſible Object has to make him know the meaning of words which ſignifie things *material* and *ſenſible*.

XXXVI.

Paſs we next from knowledge of *words* to knowledge of *things*. This knowledge we get and increaſe by *Study*. Now Study is nothing elſe, but a cloſe application of mind to the ſpeculation of Truth. The more intent we are in our view of Truth, the more we diſcover of it. And not only ſo, but the more intenſly we ſpeculate it, the more uniform we are in our judgments about it. The more we *think*, the more we come to *agree* in our *thoughts*. Now this plainly argues, that Truth is one abſolute and ſeparate Nature, independing upon our underſtandings; and, yet withal, intimately and conſtantly preſent to them: For, otherwiſe, how could it be thus in our power at any time to apply our minds to the ſpeculation of it? Now, what can this one independing, and ever-preſent Nature be, but God? To know *Truth* therefore is to know God: and *Divinity* is a larger *Study* than we are aware of.

XXXVII.

XXXVII.

Further, I conſider, that ſince God has made Man after *his own Image and likeneſs*, 'tis highly rational to believe that we imitate him in our *Underſtandings*; Underſtanding being one of the principal parts of Man. And how can we duly imitate him in our Underſtandings, unleſs we be ſuppoſed to know and perceive after the ſame general way that God knows and perceives. But now the mode of the Divine Underſtanding, is by conſulting the *Ideal World*, that is, *himſelf* as variouſly imitable and exhibitive of things. Thus 'tis moſt certain God knew and perceived before the Production of this *Ectypal* World, there being then no other mode of Perception imaginable. And thus he muſt be ſuppoſed to perceive *now* and *ever*, there being *no varying or ſhadow of turning* in God, much leſs from *better* to *worſe*, as it would be, ſhould God be ſuppoſed *before* the Creation to know by and in himſelf, and *afterwards* by any

created or foreign Ideas. It is therefore congruous to ſuppoſe that as God knows and perceives all things in himſelf, ſo Man who is after the Divine image knows and perceives all things in *God*.

XXXVIII.

Again, 'tis highly rational to believe that we Know and Perceive *Now* after the ſame manner, though not in the ſame degree, as we ſhall *hereafter* in Heaven. As the eye ſees after the ſame manner, though not in the ſame meaſure, by night as it does by day. For the ſtate of Glory is not the *Deſtruction*, but only the *Perfection* and *exaltation* of the ſtate of Nature. But now 'tis certain this ſhall be the mode of our Viſion and Preception *hereafter*, we ſhall then ſee all things in God, for ſays the Pſalmiſt, *With thee is the well of life, and in thy light ſhall we ſee light.* And therefore we may with reaſon conclude that this is the mode of our *Preſent Intelligence*, and that now alſo we *ſee Light* in the *Light of God*. And

Pſal. 36.

And accordingly ſays the Apoſtle, *now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face*: where obſerve that our *Preſent Viſion* does not differ from our *Future* as to the *Object*, but only as to the *Degree* of *Charity*. God is the *Object* of both, only now he is ſeen through a *Glaſs*, that is through the Veil of our *Mortal Fleſh*, whereas then the Veil ſhall be remov'd, and our viſion of him ſhall be *Clear* and *Perfect*.

XXXIX.

Laſtly, I conſider that I always think of *Being in general*. Particular Beings indeed I think of, or not think of at Pleaſure, but Being in general is ever before my mind, and I cannot poſſibly remove it from me. For there is the ſame Proportion in our *underſtanding* that is in our *Love*. There is variety and viciſſitude in our love of *Particular* goods, ſometimes we love them, ſometimes we do not love them, ſometimes we love this, ſometimes that, ſometimes more, and ſometimes leſs; but our love of good in

in *general* is neceſſary, conſtant, and uniform. And there is the ſame meaſure in our *Thinking*. *Particular* Beings we think of by intervals and with variety. But we always and unceſſantly think of Being in *general*. And when we think of *Particular* Beings, we don't ſo much depart from *Being in general*, as confine and determin our minds to ſome *certain* Perfections of it. Nay when we think that we think of *nothing*, our mind is then moſt full and Pregnant of wandring, Indeterminate, Indefinite Idea of Being in general. This I evidently experiment in my ſelf, and I queſtion not that whoever attends to the operations of his mind will find the ſame: Now I demand whence ſhould this come to paſs that I am thus neceſſarily determin'd at all times, and in all Places to think of Being in general, but only from this, that Being in general is inſeparably united to my mind, and intimately Preſent to it, as being *always*, and *every where*.

XL.

XL.

But now Being in general is the ſame with *God*, as has been ſhewn in the Former part. If therefore Being in general be united to my Soul, then *God* is united to my Soul. And not only ſo, but alſo more intimately united to it than any thing elſe can be, becauſe there is nothing elſe that I neceſſarily think of, whereas I do neceſſarily think of God. And if God be ſo intimately united to my Soul, how can I otherwiſe conclude but that 'tis in him that I ſee all that I ſee? For in what elſe *can* I ſee it, nothing being ſo intimately Preſential to me as God? And in what elſe *need* I ſee it, God having in himſelf the Ideas of all things, as was before proved.

XLI.

Now as to *Scripture-Authority*, beſides what *Monſieur Malebranche* has alledged, I further offer to be conſider'd. Firſt, that God is not only ſaid to *enlighten* our minds, and all our *Illumination* is every where

where aſcribed to him, but it is alſo particularly aſcribed to the *ſecond Hypoſtaſis* of the Bleſſed Trinity, who is λόγος, the word or inward conception of God, or the Ideal World. Thus in the 8*th* of the *Proverbs*, there is deſcribed a Subſtantial Wiſdom (which can be no other but the Divine λόγος, who is the Wiſdom of the Father) concerning which it is ſaid, *The Lord poſſeſs'd me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was ſet up from everlaſting, from the Beginning* (and ſo St. *John*, *In the Beginning was the word*) *or ever the earth was: When there were no Depths I was brought forth* (there's the Eternal Generation) *when there were no Fountains abounding with Water. Before the mountains were ſettled; before the Hills was I brought forth. While as yet he had not made the Earth, nor the Fields, nor the higheſt part of the duſt of the World. When he prepared the Heavens I was there, when he ſet a Compaſs upon the face of the Deep.*

When

When he eſtabliſh'd the Clouds above. When he Strengthen'd the fountains of the Deep. When he gave to the Sea his Decree, that the waters ſhould not paſs his Commandment, when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth: Then was I by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoycing always before him. This I think will readily be acknowleg'd to be a plain and Graphical Deſcription of the Divine λόγος, or Ideal World. Now of this ſame Divine λόγος it is alſo ſaid in the ſame Chapter, *Counſel is* Ver. 14. *Mine, and ſound Wiſdom, I am underſtanding. By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice. By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth.* And again *v.* 20. *I lead in the way of Righteouſneſs, in the midſt of the Paths of Judgment.* And again chap. 9. ſays the ſame ſubſtantial Wiſdom, *whoſo is ſimple let him turn in hither*, (that is, to the Intellectual Feaſt which ſhe is there ſaid to have prepared) and to him that wants underſtanding

derſtanding ſhe ſays, *Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.*

XLII.

By this it is as plain as any thing can be, that is figuratively expreſſed, that all our illumination proceeds from the Divine λόγος, the ſubſtantial wiſdom of God. But St. *John* ſpeaks more plainly; *This is the true light which inlightens every man that comes into the world.* Now *true* Light, is here the ſame as *only* Light, and implies that all other pretended lights are falſe ones. Again ſays our Lord, *I am the light of the world.* And, *I am the way, the truth, and the life.* And again ſays our Lord in his Prayer, *Sanctifie them through thy truth, thy word is truth:* Which is not meant of the written Word, but of the Subſtantial and Eternal Word, as appears from the Context. Laſtly, the Apoſtle ſays expreſly of this Divine Word, that *he is made unto us*
1 Cor. 30. *Wiſdom.* Which is exactly according to our Hypotheſis that we ſee all things in the Ideal World, or Divine λόγος.

XLIII.

XLIII.

I might add a great deal more to this purpoſe, but I think that from theſe conſiderations, joyn'd with thoſe of Mr. *Malebranche*, 'tis clear, even to Demonſtration that Man is not his own Light, or a Light to himſelf, and alſo that no other Creature can be a Light to him, but that he ſees and knows all things in the Divine λόγος, or Ideal World, which is that *true Light within him* ſo much talkt of by Enthuſiaſts, who by a kind of *blind Parturiency* of mind have *confuſedly glanc'd* at what we have here more *diſtinctly explain'd*. That all our Light and Illumination proceeds wholly from him who at firſt ſaid, *let there be light*, that we ſee ſo much of *Truth* as we ſee of *God*, that the Ideas which are in God are the very Ideas which we ſee, and that the Divne λόγος is *our Wiſdom*, as well as the *Wiſdom of his Father*. So abſolutely neceſſary is the *Doctrine of Ideas*, when rightly ſtated to the explaining the Mode

Mode both of *Divine* and *Human* Knowledge, without which I ſhall venture to affirm that they can neither of them be *explained* or *underſtood.*

The Uſe of this to Devotion.

SInce then God is that *Intelligible Light*, in which we ſee and know, and ſince we ſee and know ſo much *Truth* as God is pleaſed to diſcover to us of *himſelf*, we may hence collect to the advantage of Devotion, Firſt, What little Reaſon the Wiſeſt of us all have to be *proud* of our *underſtanding* and *knowledge*. We are generally more apt to be proud of our underſtandings than of any thing elſe about us, but this we have leaſt reaſon to be proud of, there being according to the preceding Hypotheſis no other difference between a Wiſe Man and a Fool, but only that God is pleaſed by his *in-dwelling Ideas* to illuminate one more than another, or to diſcover more of himſelf to one

one than he does to another. And if ſo, then to be proud of my knowledge, is to be proud that I am more dependant upon God than another Man is, which indeed is a very proper Argument for *Humility*, but a very Abſurd one for *Pride*.

Hence again we may collect how reaſonable 'tis that we ſhould Bleſs, Praiſe and Adore God as the ſole Author of all our Light and Knowledge, as our immediate Teacher and Inſtructer, and that to him we ſhould always addreſs our ſelves in Prayer for further illumination.

Laſtly, 'twill hence follow that we ought always moſt carefully to attend to the Dictates of this Light within us, that we ought to look upon all Truth as Divine Revelation, and on as our Reaſon a Divine Monitor, as the *Angel of God's Preſence*. And accordingly to be very careful how we tranſgreſs any of his clear Dictates, that we *grieve not this Angel leſt he ſmite us, that we do nothing againſt him, leſt he forſake us.*

The Aſpiration.

MY God, my Light, *what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the ſon of man that thou ſo regardeſt him?* But much more, What is Man that he ſhould ſo regard *himſelf?* that he ſhould regard himſelf for that which is leaſt of all his own, his Knowledge and Wiſdom? For, O God, we are not a Light to our ſelves, but 'tis thou, O God, art our Light, and in thy Light do we ſee Light.

O my *Wonderful Counſellour*, with what Humility and Poverty of ſpirit ought I to reflect upon the richeſt endowments of my mind, ſince I ſee only by thy Light, and depend upon thee for what I *Know*, as much as for what I am: And how unworthy ſhould I be of thy Divine Light, ſhould I be puffed up through the *Abundance* of this thy Revelation.

Not unto me therefore, O my God, my Light, not unto me, but to

to thy greatneſs and goodneſs be the Praiſe and the Glory. For 'tis *thy Word*, thy Eternal Word, that *is a Lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.* Pſal. 119. *The Lord is my light and my ſalvation*, and it is he that teacheth Man Knowledge. Pſal. 27. *I will* therefore *thank the Lord for giving me warning, my reins alſo chaſten me in the night-ſeaſon.* Pſal. 16.

Lighten my Darkneſs thee, I beſeech, O Father of Lights, and ſhine upon me more and more with *the Brigthneſs of thy glory. O ſend out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me unto thy holy Hill, and to thy dwelling.* Heb. 1. Pſal. 43.

Shew the light of thy countenance upon thy ſervant, and teach me thy Statutes. Pſal. 119. O let the Angel of thy Preſence go always before me in this my *Pilgrimage*, and grant that I may always attend and give heed to his Counſel and Direction, that ſo walking in thy Light here, I may for ever live, and for ever rejoyce in the full and open Light of thy Countenance hereafter, Amen.

Contemplation III.

Of Man, consider'd as an Amorous Creature.

I.

Truth and *good* Employ, the whole capacity of Man, who seems to be purely designed and made for the *contemplation* of the former, and for the *desire* and *fruition* of the latter. Having therefore consider'd Man as an *Intelligent Creature*, or as he is a *Contemplator* of *Truth*, I shall now proceed to consider him as an *Amorous Creature*, or as he is a *desirer* of *Good*.

II.

The management of this subject ingages me upon the consideration of these four things. *First*, What love or desire is, or wherein the general

neral Nature of it does consist? *Secondly*, That Love or Desire is in Man, or that Man is an *Amorous Being*. *Thirdly*, Whence Man has this Affection, or what is the proper cause of it. *Fourthly*, and lastly, After what manner this Affection has it self, or how it stands proportion'd to that cause.

III.

Now as to the *First*, I say that the general nature of Love consists in a *motion of the Soul towards good*. But this I have sufficiently explained in a distinct Treatise upon this occasion, to which I shall chuse rather to refer my Reader, than to trouble him or my self with needless repetitions.

Vid. *Theory and Regulation of Love.*

IV.

As to the *Second*, That there is such a motion in Man, I need say no more, but that we are intimately conscious of it, as much as we are of the motion of our Heart, or Lungs, or of any other Physical Impression in or about us. All therefore that I shall further insist upon

ſhall be the two laſt things: *Firſt*, What is the proper cauſe of this motion in Man. And, *Secondly*, After what peculiar manner this motion has it ſelf, or ſtands proportioned to that cauſe. To theſe two Enquiries I ſhall confine my preſent Contemplation.

V.

As to the cauſe of this motion in Man, which we call Love or Deſire, I conſider that it muſt be the ſame that is the cauſe of all the Phyſical motion in the Univerſe. Now Phyſical motion is reſolv'd into a double cauſe, an *occaſional cauſe*, and an *efficient cauſe*. The occaſional cauſe of Phyſical motion is *emptineſs* or *vacuity*. For in that which is *abſolutely full* there can be no motion, becauſe of the Impenetrability of Bodies. The efficient cauſe of Phyſical motion is either particular or univerſal. The particular is, the preſſure or impulſe of particular Bodies one againſt another. The univerſal is, no other than God himſelf, who in the Creation

tion of the World (as the *Carteſian* Philoſophy rightly ſuppoſes) diſpenced a certain portion of motion and reſt to matter, which he ſtill preſerves the ſame by his Almighty Power. So that if one part of matter ceaſe to be moved, ſo much motion as was in that is transferred to another part: And if the motion of one decreaſes or be diminiſhed, it is compenſated in another. And ſo the ſame meaſure of motion is always conſerved in the Univerſe. And unleſs God be ſuppoſed to be the Author of motion, 'twill be impoſſible to give any account of the Original of it. For neither can Bodies move themſelves, nor can they be moved by one another on to Infinity. We muſt therefore at laſt come to a *firſt Mover unmoved*, which is God. And ſo *Ariſtotle* calls God, τὸ πρῶτον κινοῦν ἀκίνητον, *the firſt Mover unmoved.*

VI.

And thus in the ſame Propoſition, the motion of Love is alſo reſolvable into a double cauſe, an *occaſional*

caſional cauſe an an *efficient* cauſe. The occaſional cauſe of this motion, as of the other, is *emptineſs* or *vacuity*. For Love or Deſire is founded upon *Indigence* and *Self-inſufficiency* of the Soul, which having not within it ſelf enough to content it, is forced to go out of it ſelf for ſupplies. And ſo *Ariſtotle* in his *Ethics*, ἀναπλήρωσις τῆς ἐνδείας ἡ ἐπιθυμία, *Deſire is the fulfilling of Indigence.* And accordingly we find that the more weak and indigent any Perſon is, ſtill the more abounding in deſire. Thus Children are more profuſe in their deſires than Adult Perſons, Women than Men, and the Sick more than thoſe who are in Health. This is well ſhadowed forth in *Jotham's* Parable,
Judg. 9. 15. wherein the *Bramble* is repreſented as more *ambitious* than either the *Olive-tree*, *Fig-tree*, or the *Vine*. For he preſently accepted of that Empire which they had all declined. Where there is no Indigence there is no room for Deſire; and accordingly God, who is an abſolutely

abſolutely *full* Being, can no more admit of deſire, than a place that is abſolutely *full* can admit of *motion.*

VII.

As to the *efficient cauſe* of this Moral motion, it is alſo double, as in Phyſical Motion. It is either Particular or Univerſal. The particular efficient cauſe, are particular goods, whether Senſual or Intellectual. Which act upon the Soul, and anſwer to the preſſure or impulſe of particular Bodies in Natural motion. The Univerſal efficient cauſe, is the Univerſal Good, or God, whom we ſuppoſe to have imprinted a certain ſtock of motion upon the *Intellectual* World, as he did upon the *Natural.* Which he alſo conſerves and maintains by his Omnipotence, as he does the other.

VIII.

For, I conſider, that there is the ſame neceſſity of a *firſt Mover* in Moral, as there is in Natural motions. And upon the very ſame grounds.

grounds. But now tis impoſſible that there ſhould be any other *firſt Mover* beſides God. And therefore whatever intermediate cauſes there may be of this motion, it muſt at laſt be reſolved into an impreſſion of God upon our Souls, whom therefore I call the *Univerſal efficient cauſe of Love.*

IX.

And ſo much for the cauſe of this motion in Man. I come now to conſider the laſt Enquiry, namely, after what peculiar manner this motion has it ſelf, or how it ſtands proportioned to its cauſe. I do not mean its *occaſional* cauſe, that being not ſo properly a *cauſe* as a conditon, but its *efficient* cauſe. Now this being double, Particular and Univerſal Good; the queſtion in more explicite terms will be, after what peculiar manner our Love ſtands affected or proportioned to Particular and Univerſal Good.

X.

Now in anſwer to this, I conſider, firſt, That ſince God is the *firſt*

firſt Mover in the motion of Love, he muſt neceſſarily determine this motion toward himſelf, or make himſelf the term of this motion. And the only term too; it being impoſſible that God ſhould act for any end different from himſelf. Whence it follows, that Univerſal good, or good in general, is the only good to which we are *directly* and *properly* moved by God.

XI.

Hence again it follows, that good in common, or God, muſt be the Primary and Adequate Term or Object of Love. This being the only good to which we are directly moved by God. I ſay *directly*, for God moves us to particular goods only by moving us to good in general, which is not to move us to them *directly*, but by *accident* and *indirectly*. God cannot move us *directly* to any thing but himſelf, that is to Univerſal good, or good in general, which therefore muſt be the Primary and Adequate Term or Object of Love.

XII.

XII.

And this we *ſenſibly experiment* as well as *rationally conclude*. For 'tis plain that we are conſcious to our ſelves of ourloving good as good, or good according to its common Nature, before we love this or that good in particular. And we are further conſcious, that when we do love any particular good, 'tis only for the ſake of the Univerſal good. We love it only becauſe we find in it ſomething of the common Nature of good, and the more we find of that, the more we love it. So that 'tis by that love whereby we love good in common, that we love any particular good. And were it not for this Univerſal good we ſhould be able to love nothing. Which by the way is a plain argument of the *real exiſtence* of ſuch *Univerſal good*, and conſequently that *there is a God*.

XIII.

For, indeed, to ſpeak out in ſhort what I would have, as we underſtand all things in God, ſo 'tis in God

God we love whatever we love. And as when we *understand*, the Divine Ideas are that which we directly and properly perceive, and Created Beings are only so far perceiv'd as they are of a similar nature with those Ideas, and so vertually contain'd in them. So when we *Love*, universal good, good in common, or God is that which we directly and properly love, and Created goods, or Particular goods are only so far loved as they resemble and participate of the nature of that universal good, to which the motion of our love is Directly and Primarily determined. So that *Particular goods* are as much *loved* in the *universal good*, as *Particular Beings* are *seen* and *perceiv'd* in the *universal Being*.

XIV.

I further consider that as we are determin'd to good in general *Primarily* and *Directly*, so also the motion whereby we are by God determin'd to it is *necessary*, *invincible* and *irresistable*. There is nothing in nature

nature more neceſſary, no nor *ſo* neceſſary and invincible as that motion whereby we are carried forth to good in general. Here the Soul muſt not pretend to the leaſt ſhadow of Liberty, having no more command over this motion, than ſhe has over the motion of the Sun. 'Tis not eaſie to conceive how *God himſelf* ſhould *fix* this motion, but 'tis plain that *Man* cannot any way *command* it.

XV.

But there is not the ſame neceſſity of Determination in our motion towards *Particular* good. I ſay not the ſame. *M. Malebranche* will allow *none*, but 'tis plain that *ſome* there is. For ſince we are invincibly determin'd to the Love of good in general, we muſt needs love good as ſuch, and conſequently in every degree of Participation, the general Reaſon of good being in ſome meaſure or other found in every degree of Particular good. Loving therefore good as good we are neceſſarily

ly

ly determin'd to love every degree of good, and consequently every particular good, with a *Natural Love*, so far as we consider it as good.

XVI.

But because this Particular good is not the Greatest good, and consequently in some junctures may come into competition with a greater, hence it comes to pass that we may upon the whole have more reason to will and refuse it, than to will and embrace it, and so are not determin'd necessarily to an *Absolute*, effectual and thorough love of it, though yet we must love it as good with a *natural* love as before.

XVII.

For 'tis impossible that we should ever *nill Good*, as we *nill Evil*, any more than we can *will Evil* as we *will Good*. But as our willing of Evil is always with a mixture of *willing*, though willing may in some junctures *prevail*, so our nilling of good is always with a mixture of *willing*,

through

though in ſome junctures nilling may *prevail:* we cannot hate good with a *Pure Hatred*, though it be only a *leſſer* good, any more than we can love evil with a *Pure Love*, though a *leſſer* evil.

XVIII.

Whenever therefore by the Competition of goods we are ingaged to nill any Particular good, we do alſo will it at the ſame time. But in different reſpects. We will it as good, and we nill it as a leſſer good, we will it *ſecundum quid*, according to a certain reſpect, and we nill it ſimply and Abſolutely: that is in other words, though we have *ſome* reaſon to will it, namely its proper good, in which reſpect we *neceſſarily* will it, and conſequently *always*, yet we have *more* reaſon to nill it in the preſent juncture, as ſtanding in competition with a greater good, and the ſtronger motive takes place as to *Abſolute* and *Effectual* love or choice.

XIX.

XIX.

This I cannot better illuſtrate than by the example of *Weights* in a *Ballance*. For though that Scale which has moſt weight in it, weighs *down*, yet it muſt needs be allow'd that the other Scale does alſo weigh and preſs *downwards*, though not effectually, becauſe otherwiſe as much weight would be required to make it weigh effectually down as if it were quite empty. And thus 'tis in the preſent caſe. Though for the Prevalency of Reaſons in ſome junctures the Scale may weigh down for the willing of good, yet the other Scale alſo preſſes, though not effectually. And this is what the Schools term a *Velleity*, or Natural Inclination. And 'tis with this Velleity, or natural inclination, that we are neceſſarily determin'd to love even Particular good; but we are not neceſſarily determin'd to love it abſolutely and effectually, becauſe there is no particular good, but what may come in Competition with a greater, and then there

will be *more* Reaſon to *nill* it than to *will* it, and the heavieſt Scale will weigh down.

XX.

And thus have I ſhewn after what peculiar manner our Love ſtands affected or proportion'd to Particular and Univerſal good. The difference conſiſts in theſe two things. *Univerſal* good is the *Primary* and *Direct* Object of our Love, but our Love tends towards *Particular* good only *ſecundarily* and *indirectly*, for the ſake of what it has of the Univerſal. Then again there is Difference as to the *Neceſſity* of the Determination, as well as to the *Primarineſs* of it. There is indeed Neceſſity on both ſides, but not in *like manner*. We are neceſſarily determin'd to Love univerſal good *Abſolutely* and *Thoroughly*. The Scale does not only *weigh* here, but *weighs down*. But we are not determin'd to love any Particular good *Abſolutely* and *Thoroughly*, but only to love it with a *Natural Inclinati-*

on

on or *Velleity*. And to such a love of it we are as necessarily determin'd, as we are to the love of universal good; but the *Actual Choice* of it is not necessary, there being no Particular good to the *Absolute* and *Effectual* love, of which we are invincibly determin'd.

The Use of this to Devotion.

THE *Amorousness* of Humane Nature, as we have here consider'd it, contains in it many and great incitements to Devotion. For First, since the Occasional Cause of our love is Indigence and Emptiness, we have great reason to be humble and lowly in Spirit, especially considering that we are continually admonish'd of this our Indigence, as often as we are Conscious to our selves that we love.

Again, since God is the Principal Efficient Cause of Love, and the first mover in all Moral as well as Natural motion, it is highly reasonable that he should be Principally loved by us from whom we receive our Love, and that we should be mighty careful how we pervert this *Divine Impression* to any undue object.

Again, since God moves us Directly and Primarily only to *himself*, and since universal good is therefore the *Primary* and *Direct* Object of our Love, hence it will follow that we ought also to make God the *Primary* and *Direct* Object of our Love, and that we ought to Love nothing for *it self*, but only *in* and *for God*.

And lastly, since we are necessarily determin'd to love good in general, *Absolutely* and *Effectually*, by such a motion as we can neither *resist*, nor any way *Command* or *Moderate*; hence it appears how

how highly neceſſary it is that we ſhould *expllicitly* fix all that Love upon God, as having all that good in him to which we aſpire with a *Blind*, *Confuſe* and *Indefinite*, though *Neceſſary* Appetite.

The Aſpiration.

MY God, *My Love*, how abſurd a thing is it that an *Amorous* Creature ſhould be a *Proud* Creature! My Love is occaſion'd by my Indigence, and I cannot Love, but I am minded of that Indigence; how ill then would Pride become me, having ſo much reaſon to be humble, and that reaſon ſo continually ſet before me!

Divine Fountain of Love, 'tis from thee I receive all my Love, and upon whom ſhould I place it but upon thee? The fire that deſcends from Heaven, where ſhould it be ſpent but upon the Altar?

Thou haſt a *Right*, O my God to all my Love, for I cannot love thee with any Love but what is *thy own*. O then do thou Regulate this thy own *Divine Impreſſion*, and grant I may never ſin againſt thee, by the abuſe of that Love which thou haſt given me. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth*, for doing ſo much towards the guidance and Regulation of my Love, as to carry me Directly only to Univerſal good, thereby teaching me that I ought to make thee the only *Direct* and *Primary* Object of my Love. My God, I will love as thou teacheſt me, the Firſt and Direct Motion of Love ſhall be towards thee, and whatever I love beſides thee, I will love only in and for thee.

I thank thee, alſo My God, for that thou haſt made it ſo neceſſary for me to love univerſal good. Thou, O God, art this univerſal good, and I ought to love thee with the very ſame Love where-

with

with I love *Happineſs* it ſelf. O that I were as neceſſarily inclined to love thee, as I am to love Happineſs! I do not deſire to be truſted with any *Liberty* in the Love of thee. But this, my God, I cannot hope for, till I ſhall ſee thee as thou art. O let me therefore love thee to the utmoſt Capacity of a *Free Creature.* Thou, O God, haſt ſet no Bounds to my love of thee, O let not me ſet any. My God, I do not, I love thee with all my Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength. *Lord thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee.*

Contemplation IV.

Man consider'd as an Irregular Lover..

I.

HItherto we have considered Man as *God* made him. He was made by God, a *Creature*, an *Intelligent* Creature, and an *Amorous* Creature. The two first of which import the Perfection of God *actually participated* by him, in as much as in him he not only lives, moves and has his Being, but in him has all his *Understanding* also. The last imports in him a *tendency* to the *Divine* Perfection; which is also an *actual* Perfection of his *own* Nature, and such as God also has therein implanted. And thus far is Man wholely the *Divine Workmanship*,

manſhip, and carries in him the *Image* of him that made him. Let us now conſider him as he has made himſelf, and is as it were his *own Creature.*

II.

Now thus to conſider Man, is to conſider him as an *Irregular Lover.* And to do this fully, and to the purpoſe intended, Three things will be requiſite. *Firſt*, To ſhew what it is to be an *Irregular Lover. Secondly*, Hw prone and apt Man is to *Love Irregularly. Thirdly*, That Man himſelf is the Author of this proneneſs of his to *Irregular Love.*

III.

In relation to the firſt, if it be demanded, What it is to be an *Irregular Lover?* I anſwer in one word, That 'tis to be a *Fool. Sin* and *Folly*, *Sinner* and *Fool*, are words in Scripture of a like ſignification, and are indifferently uſed one for the other. And we are taught in the *Schools* of *Morality*, that every *Sinner*

Sinner is *ignorant*. Πᾶς ὁ μοχθηρὸς ἀνοητός, says the *Socratical* Proverb. Indeed, Sin has its *Birth* in *Folly*, and every ſtep of its *progreſs* is *Folly*, and its *concluſion* is in *Folly*. But this will appear more diſtinctly from the conſideration of theſe two things. *Firſt*, Of the abſurdity and madneſs of the choice which every *Irregular Lover* makes. And, *Secondly*, The error and miſtake that muſt neceſſarily precede in his Judgment, before he does or can make it.

IV.

As for the abſurdity of his choice, 'tis the greateſt that can be imagined. For what is it that he chuſes? 'Tis to do that which he muſt and certainly will *repent* of, and wiſh he had never done, either in *this* World, for its *illneſs* and *ſinfulneſs*; or, in the *next*, for its *ſad effects* and *conſequences*. 'Tis to deſpiſe the *Authority*, *Power*, *Juſtice* and *Goodneſs* of God: 'tis to tranſgreſs his Commands, which are good

good and equitable, and in keeping of which there is *preſent*, as well as *future* reward. 'Tis to act againſt the Frame of his Rational Nature, and the Divine Law of his Mind: 'tis to diſturb the Order and Harmony of the Creation, and by Extra-lineal motions to violate the Sacred Intereſt of Society. 'Tis, *laſtly*, to incur the Anger of an Omnipotent and Juſt God, and to hazard falling from his Supreme Good and the laſt end of his Being, and the being ruined in his *beſt* Intereſt to all Eternity.

V.

All this the *Irregular Lover* partly actually incurs, and partly puts to the hazard in every wrong motion of his Love. And for what is all this? Is it for any conſiderable intereſt, for any thing that bears ſomething of proportion, and may pretend to competition and a rival Weight in the oppoſite Scale of the *Ballance*? No, 'tis only for a ſhadow, for a trifle, for the gratification

tion of ſome baſer appetite, for the acquirement of ſome little intereſt, which has nothing to divert us from adhering to that which is truly our beſt, but only that poor advantage of being *preſent*, tho' at the ſame time its *vanity* be preſent with it.

VI.

And now is this a choice for a *wiſe Man*, for a Man of *common Senſe*? Nay, is it a choice for a Man in his *right Wits* to make? Were a Man to beg an Eſtate, would one need a better demonſtration of a Man's being a Fool, than ſuch a *procedure* as this? If therefore *abſurdity* of *choice* be any argument of folly, the Irregular Lover is certainly a very great Fool.

VII.

But his folly will further appear if we conſider, *Secondly*, the error and miſtake that muſt neceſſarily precede in his Judgment before he does or can make ſuch a choice. All irre-

irregularity of Love is founded upon ignorance and miſtake. For as 'tis impoſſible to chuſe evil as evil in general, ſo is it no leſs impoſſible to chuſe or will any *particular kind* of evil, as evil; and conſequently, 'tis impoſſible to will the evil of *ſin* as ſuch, (the Devil himſelf can't love ſin as ſin.) If therefore it be choſen, it muſt be choſen under the appearance of good, and it can have this appearance no otherwiſe than as conſidered as a *leſſer evil*, (for that's the only way whereby an evil may appear good or eligible.) And ſo it muſt be conſider'd before it be choſen.

VIII.

He therefore that chuſes ſin, conſiders it at the inſtant of commiſſion, as a leſſer evil. And therein conſiſts his error and miſtake. He is either *habitually* or *actually* ignorant. He either has not the habitual knowledge of all thoſe things which ſhould preſerve him in his duty, or at leaſt he has not the actual conſideration

ſideration of them. For 'tis that which muſt bring him to *repentance*. And 'tis impoſſible a Man ſhould ſin with the very ſame *Thoughts*, *Convictions* and *Conſiderations* about him, as he has when he *repents*. This I ſay is no more poſſible than for a Ballance to move to contrary ways with the ſame *Weight*, and in the ſame *Poſture*. He therefore that ſins, wants that conſideration at leaſt to *keep* him *in* his *duty*, which when he *repents*, brings him *to* it. And is therefore ignorant and miſtaken.

IX.

The ſum of this matter is, whoever thinks ſin a leſſer evil, is miſtaken in his judgment. But whoever commits ſin, does then think it a leſſer evil: therefore whoever commits ſin is miſtaken in his judgment; ſo great is the folly of *Irregular Love*, both in reference to the abſurdity of the choice, and to the error and miſtake of the chuſer. And ſo great reaſon has every *Irregular*

regular Lover to take up that confeſſion of the *Pſalmiſt*, *So fooliſh was I, and ignorant: and even as a beaſt before thee*, Pſal. 73.

X.

Having thus conſidered what it is to be an *Irregular Lover*, let us now in the Second place conſider how prone and apt Man is to be guilty of *Irregular Love*. 'Tis the grand diſadvantage of our Mortal condition, to have our Soul conſorted with a *diſproportionate* and *uncompliant Vehicle*, and to have her aſpiring Wings pinn'd down to the ground. We have a mixt conſtitution, made up of two vaſtly different ſubſtances, with Appetites and Inclinations to different Objects, ſerving to contrary Intereſts, and ſteering to oppoſite Points. A compound of Fleſh and Spirit, a thing between an *Angel* and a *Beaſt*. We lug about with us a *Body* of ſin; and the Earthly Tabernacle weighs down the mind. We are at perpetual War and Defiance with our

our ſelves, divided like the *Planetary Orbs*, between contrary motions and imperfect tendencies, and like a *factious State*, diſtracted and diſturbed with a ſwarm of jarring and rebellious Paſſions. The Spirit indeed is willing, but then the Fleſh is weak. We have, 'tis true, a Law in our *Minds*, but then we have alſo another in our *Members*, which *wars always*, and *moſt times prevails* againſt that of our *Mind*, and brings us into captivity to the Law of ſin; ſo that as the Apoſtle ſays, we cannot do the things which we would.

XI.

But, notwithſtanding this ſtrong *invigoration* of the *Animal Life*, puſhing us ſtill on to the enjoyment of ſenſible good, were our Intellectual part always *awake*, and equally *attentive* to that *Divine Light* which ſhines within her, Man would always love *regularly*, tho' with the reluctancy of an imperfect motion to the contrary. But 'tis far otherwiſe.

wiſe. We do not always equally attend to the *Divine Illumination*, but the light of our Underſtandings is often under an *Eclipſe*, and ſo does not ſhine upon our wills with an equal and uniform brightneſs. Hence it comes to paſs that our judgments and apprehenſions of things are various and changeable. And from this variety and changeableneſs of our *Judgements*, proceeds great variety and changebleneſs in our *Wills*.

XII.

Now this being the condition of Man, he muſt needs be very prone and liable to *Irregular Love*. For being always ſtrong inclined to ſenſible good, and not having the *Eye* of his *attention* equally *open* and *awake*, he will be often apt to be *actually ignorant* of what he *habitually knows*, and (eſpecially in the heat of a temptation) to judge ſenſible good a greater good than that which is Moral and Divine, and conſequently the want of ſenſible good to be a greater evil than ſin, and ſo

rather than want the enjoyment of ſenſible good he will conſent to the commiſſion of ſin, which through want of due *attention* he then erroneouſly thinks the leſſer evil of the two.

XIII.

Thus apt and obnoxious is Man to *Irregular Love*. But that which moſt of all aggravates the badneſs of his condition, is that 'tis all owing to himſelf, and that he himſelf is the ſole Author of this his proneneſs to *Irregular Love*. 'Tis a point Univerſally received, That the preſent ſtate of Man is not that ſtate wherein God firſt made him, but a ſtate of *degeneracy* and *depravation*. And, indeed, 'tis no way congruous to ſuppoſe that God could with the Honour of his Attributes ſend ſuch a piece of Work immediately out of his Hands, as Man is now. And if God could not make Man at firſt in ſuch a ſtate as he is now in, then neither could he ſubject him to it without ſin. For, if he could ſubject him to it without ſin, then he might as well have made him ſo at *firſt*; but,

but, 'tis ſuppoſed that he could not make him ſo at *firſt*, and therefore neither could he ſubject him to this condition without ſin. And if not without ſin, then not without ſin *really* and *truly* committed by him. For, to ſubject him to this condition for the ſake of ſin *arbitrarily* imputed only, is the ſame as to do it without any ſin at all. 'Tis neceſſary therefore to pre-ſuppoſe ſome real ſin or other in Man as the cauſe of this his *depravation* and great proneneſs to *Irregular Love*.

XIV.

But, now whether every Man ſinned in his own Perſon for himſelf, and ſo was his own *Adam*, according to the *Hypotheſis* of the *Pre-exiſtentiaries*; or, whether one common Perſon ſinned for all the reſt, as 'tis more vulgarly held, I ſhall not here take upon me to *determine*. 'Tis ſufficient to ſay, in general, that 'tis neceſſary to preſuppoſe ſome Sin or other in man, truly and properly Speaking, as the Cauſe of this his Depraved and Miſerable

Condition. And they that can Intelligibly make out *Original* Sin, as 'tis usually term'd, to be such, may make use of that *Hypothesis*. But, if that be not intelligible, then we must of necessity come to *Pre-existence*. However it be, this only I contend for at present, that some sin or other must be supposed in Man antecedent to this his condition, and that 'tis through his own fault that he is so prone to *Irregular Love*.

The Use of this to Devotion.

THIS whole Contemplation serves very much to the greatest *Humiliation* and *Mortification* of Man, both before God, and all his Fellow-Creatures. For, if *Irregular Love* be so monstrous a deformity, and so great a folly, and if Man be so very prone to *Irregular Love*, and is also himself the Author of that proneness, what stronger *Combination* of Argument can there be imagined, for *Humility* and *Lowliness* of Spirit.

Spirit. For this is the worſt that can be ſaid of any thing, and is the *Sum* and *Abſtract* of all that's baſe and vile.

It may alſo, Secondly, be argued from the great evil of *Irregular Love*, and from our great proneneſs to be guilty of it, that it highly concerns us to have conſtant recourſe to God in Prayer, for his Divine aid and aſſiſtance, againſt falling into that which is ſo great a *Folly*, and ſo great a *Miſchief*, and which by an Infirmity of our own contracting we are ſo very *apt* to fall into.

The Aſpiration.

TO thee, O my God, belongs *Praiſe* and *Adoration*, for endowing me with thoſe excellent Powers of *Underſtanding* and *Love*, but to me Shame and Confuſion of face, for *miſapplying* the one, and *not attending* to the Dictates of the other.

I bluſh, O my God, and am aſhamed to think that my nature ſhould ſtand ſo much inclined to irregular Love,

Love, a thing ſo full of Miſchief and Folly, but much more that I my ſelf ſhould bring my ſelf into ſuch a ſtate of impotence and depravation. My heart ſheweth me the great Foulneſs and Abominableneſs of Sin, and yet I find my ſelf over prone to commit it. *So Fooliſh am I and Ignorant, and even as a Beaſt before thee.*

But I deſire, O my God, to be yet more vile. I am not vile enough in my own eyes, though too much ſo in thine. Nor can I ever be vile enough in my *Opinion*, for being ſo vile in my *Nature*. Strike me then I beſeech thee with a deep, and with a lively ſenſe of my own Wretchedneſs, and make me as *Humble* as I am *Wicked*.

And ſince, through the Infirmity of my fleſh, I am ſo apt to err in the conduct and application of my Love, *O hold thou up my goings in thy Paths, that my Footſteps ſlip not.* Make me always to attend to that *Divine Light* of thine within my Breaſt, and let the *victorious ſweetneſs* of thy Grace *out-charm*

charm all the reliſhes of ſenſible good. But above all, *Keep thy Servant from Preſumptuous ſins, leſt they get the Dominion over me.* And let all theſe *words of my mouth*, and this whole *meditation of my heart be always acceptable in thy ſight, O Lord, my ſtrength and my redeemer.* Amen. Pſal. 19.

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